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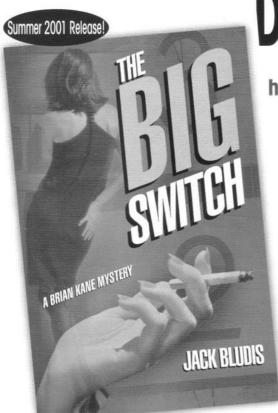
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COVER: Ursula Andress as Ayesha, by Bill Chancellor

Scarlet Letters

With other magazines wasting space on the same old jazz, it was a revelation to buy Scarlet Street #41 and find something new and fresh and exciting-THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY, by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley. This may be the best thing Scarlet Street has ever published, which is saying really something! The Hurd Hatfield and Helmut Berger interviews (by Jim Lysaght and David Del Valle, respectively) were perfect companion pieces, too. More fresh ground was covered with Ms. Loban's remarkable article Empire of the Imagination: She Who Must Be Obeyed. A pleasure, too, to see the return of Horror Italian Style, which looks to be in good hands with Troy Howarth. The icing on the cake was the Curt Siodmak interview by Kevin G. Shinnick and Terry Pace. Fascinating and maddening-in other words, Siodmak!

Congratulations on the best magazine being published today! In fact, congratulations on absolutely the best magazine published ever!

Joyce McCain Argyle, NY

I just received Scarlet Street #41 and it was certainly worth the wait. Thanks to reader Craig Roberts for reminding me that I have been delinquent, and for your kind response. I plead guilty to neglect, caused by an extra heavy workload during the last year because of the release of

my films on DVD.

I personally agree with reader John Hitz about ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN, but I also think that Bob Hope's version of THE CAT AND THE CANARY was infinitely superior to his GHOST BREAKERS and should be listed in that context. ONE FRIGHT-ENED NIGHT was only a minor B movie made by Mascot Pictures in the mid-thirties. Old dark house thrillers, some straight and some with comedic touches, were a staple of the independent film production companies in the early sound era. One of the best was Monogram's THE THIRTEENTH GUEST, with Ginger Rogers and Lyle Talbot.

The News Hound, in reporting on Anchor Bay's VHS release of HORROR HOSPITAL, describes it as coming from "the folks at Hallmark—the sleazy British producers, not the greeting card company." Actually, the producers of this British film were Antony Balch and myself. We first released it in the USA through the American distribution company Hallmark Productions, which was famous for putting out MARK OF THE DEVIL and offering cinema patrons free vomit bags.

Thanks to Jeff Thompson for his appreciative review of CORRIDORS OF BLOOD, now on DVD, but it's not a little girl who is involved in an amputation scene; Boris Karloff amputates the

leg of a full-grown man. He also performs minor surgery on the little girl's infected leg and cures her.

I loved the interview with Curt Siod-mak because he always took credit for the accomplishments of others and contemptuously dismissed anyone who disagreed with him. If he spoke with tongue in cheek, it was not always apparent. There is no doubt that he created Lon Chaney's "persona" in THE WOLF MAN, but he didn't invent the idea of the werewolf. We all know that Universal made the first werewolf movie, THE WERE-WOLF OF LONDON, with Henry Hull some years earlier. It was infinitely superior to the Chaney film, which suffered from severe budgetary constraints de-

spite its "all-star" cast.

The interview with Hurd Hatfield, and the accompanying article on The Pictures OF DORIAN GRAY, are fascinating. I had the pleasure of meeting Hatfield in the late forties, when a European producer whom I was representing planned to make an updated version of CRIME AND PUN-ISHMENT in France. We tried for Montgomery Clift and Claude Rains to play the leading roles, but they both turned it down. Rains, who had worked with Hatfield in Michael Curtiz's THE UN-SUSPECTED, suggested that he would be ideal casting. Raymond Massey was willing to undertake the other role, but Hatfield, though he couldn't have been more charming, also turned it down. By then the financing had collapsed and the picture was never made. Recently, TCM showed DESTINATION MURDER on television, which was a bizarre gangster story costarring Hurd Hatfield with Albert Dekker. They both played coldblooded villains and Hurd was very effective in a most uncharacteristic role.

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE...



Phyllis Coates



I learned more about SHE than I ever thought was possible from reading Lelia Loban's terrific article EMPIRE OF THE IMAGINATION. I look forward to Part Two and wonder if she will make reference to L'ATLANTIDE, a fantasy about the lost city of Atlantis, which was written by the famous French author, Pierre Benoit, who obviously was influenced by Rider Haggard's work. In L'ATLANTIDE, the lost city is situated below the Sahara Desert and also ruled by a ruthless and seemingly immortal beautiful woman, whose name is Antinea. It was made as a silent movie and then G.W. Pabst produced the first sound remake in French, English, and German versions, all of them starring the lovely Brigitte Helm of ME-TROPOLIS fame as the ruthless queen. The French legionnaire who becomes her lover was played by Pierre Blanchar in the French version and John Stuart in the English one. In a typical Hollywood remake in the forties, Maria Montez played Antinea and Jean-Pierre Aumont was her lover. George Pal's ATLANTIS, THE LOST CONTINENT appropriated the title for a sword-and-sandal epic that had nothing to do with Benoit, but Edgar Ulmer once more remade L'ATLANTIDE in Italy in a modern version called JOUR-NEY BENEATH THE DESERT, starring Haya Harareet and Jean-Louis Trintignant. By then, the poor lost city under the desert found itself in the middle of a nuclear testing site! Fortunately, Rider Haggard's Ayesha has been spared such indignities, at least up to now.

Richard Gordon New York, NY

The News Hound replies: I send my apologies to Mr. Gordon, who to my knowledge has never done anything the least bit sleazy.

Okay, I'm hooked! For a few years I've stood at the newsstand flipping through Scarlet Street and occasionally bought it. Then I bought a back issue, then couldn't wait until the next issue came out, then I just bought it without even flipping through it! I guess that means I really love what you're doing! I even spotted my name in Forry's column once. We've been friends for 30 years. So this is just to say thanks and to ask a favor. Please, lose the gray tones behind the pages of copy. I find it hard to read. Also, your graphic designer puts ghost images and bats to add design to the

Continued on page 8



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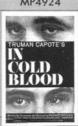
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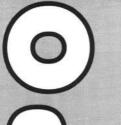


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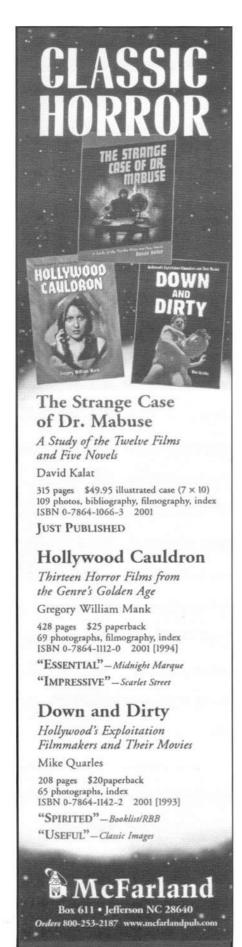


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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

page, but it's very annoying. As a graphic artist myself, I know the temptation to noodle with the computer, but that is "gilding the lily."

Shel Dorf San Diego, CA

We try to keep Scarlet Street easy to read, Shel, and have lightened the occasional gray background. Believe me, it's not a temptation to gild any lilies, because it's a lot of extra work; still, we think it's necessary and the majority of Scarlet Readers love our look.

Richard, you'll recall that I used a copy of Scarlet Street in my movie PLAYING BY HEART. I've also noted the very nice comments you've given the movie from time to time in the magazine—and I greatly appreciate it!

I just finished the 10th Anniversary issue and must say it was really terrific, especially the "DORIAN GRAY in the movies" overview—very well-researched, with invaluable information. I think that's what elevates your publication above all others. It's not your standard zine—not that there's anything wrong with those!—but that rare combination of



Ryan Phillippe and Willard Carroll on the set of Carroll's star-studded PLAYING BY HEART (1998).

entertaining presentation with academic import. (Hope that doesn't sound too pretentious!) Anyway, you get my drift.

I wonder if you've ever considered covering Indian (Hindi) movies. I was in India two months ago, saw a recent release in a Madras movie theater, and am now hooked for life. I've bought innumerable DVDs over the past few weeks and Sunday afternoons have now become Hindi day in my house. The best of them (and, as I'm certain you're aware, they make more movies per year than any other country) are wildly entertaining. Close in spirit to the innocence and giddy fun of our sixties movies (before we lost both our innocence and ability to make giddy fun movies), they have incredibly beautiful casts and settings. For some reason, Indians are enamored of Switzerland so there's almost always a scene shot there. (I'm not making this up!) And, of course, they all have musical numbers, some of which are genuinely spectacular. Not every movie is a classic-actually, of the 30 or so I've watched, I'd say three are objectively very good movies on any scale. An amazing number are available

on DVD from a variety of US mail order sources. As a bonus, almost all of the newer releases have English subtitles. (And if you think the subtitles are a riot on some Hong Kong movies, wait till you get an eyeful of some of these howlers!)

Anyway, I don't think many publications, if any, have done much of a recent overview, history, etc. It seems very fertile territory and the availability of the movies might make it even more appealing for your readers.

Willard Carroll Los Angeles, CA

It's certainly a great suggestion, Willard, and we'll see what we can do with it. Coincidentally, you'll find an Indian version of SHE covered briefly in this very issue!

The interviews simply blow me away! I loved the Hurd Hatfield interview by Jim Lysaght and David Del Valle's Helmut Berger interview is the kind of no-holdsbarred thing other magazines don't have the guts to run. Isn't it time for a book collection of *Scarlet Street* interviews?

Jennifer Meddick San Diego, CA Yes, indeed, it's about time....

Scarlet Street #41 is an absolutely magnificent issue. The Pictures of Dorian Gray is a stunning piece of research and quite mesmerizing. Congratulations to both Lelia Loban and Richard Valley. FIVE FINGER EXERCISE: THE BEAST WITH FIVE FIN-GERS is a lively review by Ken Hanke. I knew nothing about Robert Florey's film career, so I was quite interested in Ken's appraisal of his overall body of work. The Helmut Berger interview by David Del Valle was absolutely hypnotic—you can actually hear Helmut Berger talking. David gets to the essence of the man-but, David, can we assume that Helmut was not very faithful to Luchino Visconti? The Curt Siodmak interview by Kevin Shinnick and Terry Pace captures a highly opinionated man, who is actually great fun to read. The genesis of FRANKEN-STEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN is a hoot and a holler!

Of course, the letters are always great reading, as are the book reviews. (Richard Valley's review of Frank Dello Stritto and Andi Brooks' *Vampire Over London* was quite wonderful.) By the way, the photo selection throughout the magazine is quite striking—who does all the work? Raymond Banacki

Raymond Banacki Brooklyn, NY

We often get pictures from contributing writers, Ray, but most of the photos are chosen by Ye Little Olde Reditor and managing editor Tom Amorosi.

Richard, it was indeed a thrill meeting you at the Chiller Theatre Convention this past April, in as much as I always admired your publication. Your recent *Scarlet Street* cover story on Dorian Gray pushed me into conversation and I can't help think that dear Hurd Hatfield had something to do with it. We were friends for nearly 30 years!

Truly, what a delight it was reading that issue, which was full of nostalgia. I

Frankly_Searlet

Don't be afraid of Logo! It's as harm less as a kitten—or "as harmless as kitchen," as the Monstrous Medved Brothers once claimed the late, great Bela Lugosi said in Ed Wood's BRIDE OF THE MONSTER (1955)! Anyway, this is just our playful way of telling you Scarlet Streeters that a few changes have been made here and there in our 10th year of publication, but trust us—it won't hurt a bit!

Actually, the logo has been changed a number of times over the years. The first logo lasted all of one issue, the second from Issue #2 through #9, and the third from #10 through #41, with variations in color. The main reason for changing it again is to increase layout possibilities on our covers. That Big Red Box sometimes got in the way.

Speaking of covers, Bill Chancellor did a bang-up job on She Who Must Be Obeyed for this issue! We've featured Bill's fantastic work on the covers of *Scarlet Streets* #36, #39, and #40, and you can bet he'll be back in the future, where most of you will be spending the

rest of your lives. (Seems I'm channelling Ed Wood today!)

Sharp-eyed Streeters will notice another change this issue-namely, the Dreaded Price Increase. The last increase (then, as now, of a single dollar in the good ol' USA) was back in Scarlet Street #27, and since then the post office has gone hog wild with price increases and so have the companies providing paper and the printers who print on it. We've always taken pride in giving our audience a good show, and when it came down to a choice between charging another buck or cutting down on our page count, well, we decided to give the buck a fly. No, sir, no one will ever be able to accuse us of not giving a flying buck . . . !

There's something else new in this latest issue of Scarlet Street, or rather "someone's else new," in that we've a number of new writers joining us. Let's extend a warm welcome to Harry Long (whose music column always delights in Classic Images), Duane Butler, Tom Soter, Ron Morgan, Anthony Dale, and SPFX mag publisher Ted A. Bohus, who once made the mistake of using managing editor Tom Amorosi, former pub Jessie Lilley, and Ye Reditor in his film VAMPIRE VIXENS FROM VENUS (1994).

In case I missed mentioning them during last issue's celebration of a Scarlet Decade, I want also to extend a hearty



handclasp to recent (and hopefully future) contributors Jim Lysaght and David Del Valle for adding immeasurably to our coverage of The Pictures of Dorian Gray.

And now, on with the show . . . !

Richard Valley

suppose I'll be dating myself, but reading the roster of Dorian Gray productions, I can happily say I've seen most every one, including the Joffrey Ballet production with Dennis Wayne. Now, he was indeed perfection! I had met Bob Joffrey on various occasions through a dear and great friend of mine, Larry Kert, whom I'm sure you'll remember from WEST SIDE STORY fame. He and Bob were close friends and I have such wonderful memories of those days—what parties!

I did like the Jeremy Brett version, but hated the portrait. The Peter Firth version I did like very much. At that time, I was Peter Firth crazy. Unfortunately, Peter has lost overwhelmingly what the gods bestowed so long ago. Following a matine of AMADEUS on Broadway, he left the theater and returned to England. This was not exactly a professional act and so Eq-



uity dropped the Sword of Damacles and ended his New York career.

In the interview with Hurd, he speaks of the original 1945 drawings which he owned. I'm enclosing a shot of me holding one of those originals. The cat statue I

had seen for so many years. If I may be so bold as to make a major correction, Hurd died on Christmas Day, December 25, 1999, not December 29. He was visiting a friend for Christmas Eve. He stayed over and subsequently passed away in his sleep on Christmas Day. He was truly one of a kind and I am baffled and angry that the Academy Awards neglected to mention him during the memorial slot of the Awards presentation. Whoever does their research?

I did a film some years ago that resulted in a sort of Dorian Gray portrait, the closest I ever got to the title. It is still up in my closet and I'm terrified to see if it has altered!

Craig Dudley Sheepshead Bay, NY

Scarlet Street #39 includes the first part of an interview with Curt Siodmak, one of the genre's most important film writers. No one will ever say that Mr. Siodmak was an obsequious or insincere man, for he was definitely candid in his remarks about Val Lewton, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney, etc. I disagree with many of Siodmak's opinions, although I loved his brief jab at Nancy Davis, a bland actress married to a bland actor who became a dreadful president. Siodmak's unbridled frankness reminded me of the Scarlet Street (#26) interview with another candid nonagenarian, actor and author David Manners.

Speaking of authors, Forrest J Ackerman's tribute to Siodmak in The Crimson Chronicles was fine, though in retrospect the final paragraph is poignant indeed. There will be no 100-candle birthday

cakes, as Curt Siodmak passed away on September 2, 2000, at the age of 98. Gone but not forgotten.

Timothy M. Walters Muskogee, OK

Congratulations on a terrific issue. Scarlet Street #41 has to be one of the very best Scarlet Streets ever—rivaled only by the sublime GODS AND MONSTERS/BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN ish (#30) and the DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL issue (#25).

Paramount among the many delights: Leila Loban and Richard Valley's superb article on the silent DORIAN GRAYs. This is what film scholarship is supposed to be—meticulous research and handsome wordcraft. It's one of the most entertaining and informative examples of film history I've read in a very long time. I can hardly wait for the subsequent installments. Hats off, as well, for the concluding segment of the Curt Siodmak interview and for the Hurd Hatfield piece. More proof that Scarlet Street does the best celebrity interviews in the biz!

Mark D. Člark Columbus, OH

(e)

I want to thank you and your staff for the kind mention of my book *Uneasy Dreams* in *Scarlet Street* #39. I have been aware of *Scarlet Street* since my friend Dick Klemensen inadvertently outed me in your letters column several years ago. Dick was far more upset about it than I was and apologized to me quite needlessly. I was glad because it brought *Scarlet Street* to my attention and I have been a fan of your upfront attitudes ever since.





When I was writing Uneasy Dreams, a friend of mine made the suggestion that I be less obvious about my sexuality in some of the text. He thought it might be off-putting for some of the horror film fans. I pointed out that Scarlet Street certainly didn't pull any punches and neither would I. That said, I want to respond to one of the comments in your review of my book and show how the author is very much at the mercy of his publisher. Your review mentioned that at times I stepped outside the parameters I set for myself. This is the one criticism that has surfaced in even the most favorable reviews. In the first version of Uneasy Dreams that I submitted to the publisher, I had included an "appendix of related titles" at the end. It included about 20 films that were made either before or after the 1956-1976 Golden Age. I felt that these movies should be mentioned because they had a direct connection with the films listed in the main text. I had also completely indexed the book with this appendix in mind. McFarland returned the manuscript to me and insisted that these films be incorporated into the main text. I argued the point, but they were adamant and offered no reason other than that was the way they wanted it done. Needless to say, I had to restructure and re-index the entire book, which was a nightmare. I then asked if these films could be singled out within the text to show that they were not within the time frame specified. This was also denied without apparent reason. The only con-

cession I was given is a sentence in the Preface stating that "Sprinkled throughout are a handful of films which were made either before or after the time period." I have always felt that McFarland's decision was a wrong one and apparently most reviewers tend to agree.

Gary A. Smith Los Angeles, CA

Strange are the ways of publishers. Wait a minute—I'm a publisher! I recommend Uneasy Dreams to all our readers. It's funny, but we never intended Scarlet Street to be a sexual trailblazer. We just felt that many of the folks responsible for the films, books, and TV shows beloved by horror fans were gay, that this fact informed their work, and that there was simply no reason not to acknowledge it. I never dreamed that such a sensible decision could be the cause of so much controversy, and yet hardly an issue goes by of some other publications without someone bitching and moaning about gay subtext and how they're sick of it. Well, what can I say, except—grow up!

Just to let you know that *Scarlet Street* is not alone in being besieged by the legions of Lex Barker fans, although the letters you receive are apparently more florid—or less edited? Is there some social trend afoot here to which closer attention should be paid? And what is it about Barker's feet? Any fool can see that it's Lex's pecs that are worth a sonnet or two.

Harry Long Lebanon, PA

A trend afoot about feet? What kind of heel would want to start a thing like that?

Your magazine is really the best of its kind. It has a lot more class than the others. Also, I liked the letter Mr. Michael Thomas wrote about Bela Lugosi's Ygor. THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN is one of my favorite Frankenstein films due to Bela's performance.

David Reeser Martinsburg, WV

Enjoyed *Scarlet Street* #41, especially the Curt Siodmak interview. Very off the cuff, candid, and witty.

I wanted to make mention of something concerning the SHE DVD review. Although it is a very sharp transfer of a film once almost impossible to find, the Kino version is missing an entire reel! It would fit in exactly between chapters 10 and 11 on the DVD. In it, Tanya explores the vast corridors of the palace in search of the injured Leo. She sneaks into the private chamber of She, and speaks with her about Leo's recovery. Although the removal of this scene really does not hinder the storyline, it does remove some foreshadowing of the reincarnation aspect of the story, which is hinted at in SHE's dialogue. Following this is a scene between the high priest and Holly, in which the former almost spills the beans about the flame of life and its whereabouts, as well as the immortality of She. All told, there's about eight minutes missing from the film.

The saddest part of the story is that a private collector who owns a very good

16mm print of the complete version, offered his materials to Kino after the VHS tape appeared, in the hopes that they would incorporate the missing footage into the DVD. They declined.

Jim Doherty Chicago, IL

(*)

Wow! I can't believe how your staff can cram so much information in one magazine! Let me throw out my *Reader's Digest, Entertainment Weekly,* and *Rolling Stone* magazines and just keep every issue of *Scarlet Street* around. *Scarlet Street* is all the entertainment I need!

Loved the review on the James Bond Collection mentioned in Issue #41. Of course, I loved Troy Howarth's Horror Italian Style. I was in Bologna, Italy, for a while, and I remember those classic Italian horror movies. They were as exciting as Italy's spaghetti Westerns. Boris Karloff in the 1963 BLACK SABBATH—ah, can't get any better than that! That movie gave me goosebumps!

THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY is a real classic piece. The 1890 novel by Oscar Wilde has given birth to some marvelous movies and I hope Hollywood will do another adaptation of this horror novel. Seeing the portrait age while Dorian remained youthful still haunts me to this very day!

Paul Dale Roberts Elk Grove, CA

[*]

I realize that after each issue of your magazine is published, you must receive

a zillion letters such as mine. However, I would like to try your patience just one more time.

Usually, I am neither a reader of your magazine nor devotee of this particular genre of motion pictures. However, I could not help but notice the headline of Scarlet Street #36: Phyllis Kirk in the HOUSE OF WAX. Your headline caught my attention because I really enjoyed Miss Kirk's portrayal of Nora Charles on the fifties television series THE THIN MAN. It was one of my favorite programs and I eagerly look forward to the time when it will be retelecast on cable or available on videocassette.

As you might imagine, I particularly enjoyed the interview with Miss Kirk and the story about the television series. I am also delighted that Miss Kirk is fine and I am certain that she appreciates the remembrance in your magazine. As I have indicated, I have not been a regular reader of *Scarlet Street*. However, I will be looking for it on the magazine racks at the better bookstores for similar nostalgic articles in the future. It has been very much appreciated.

William B. Anderson Richmond, VA

[*]

Just delighted, and excited to see that Scarlet Street's hidden agenda includes the wild, wacky and erotic world of foot fetishism! Your readers may want to know that the new teen horror film FINAL DESTINATION includes a very cute young guy dying—in his bare feet! His

death throes include several shots of him wiggling his toes!

Of course, hunky Johnny Depp did a rather graphic barefoot scene in THE ASTRONAUT'S WIFE, which was the high point of the entire movie. The film also features several closeups of Charlize Theron's well pedicured tootsies!

Perhaps other readers can write in and let us know what other horror films show cute guys in their bare feet! Of course, Lon Chaney Jr.'s barefoot appearances as The Wolf Man don't count. Chaney wasn't cute! I realize, of course, that I am now also promoting a hidden agenda, and bringing sexuality to fandom. Perhaps we can hold a prayer vigil at the next convention so that our soles can be saved!

Chris Winters

Hoboken, NJ

Thanx for dropping us this—ahem!—footnote, Chris. We always try to print one heartfelt, serious letter per issue.

Write today to Scarlet Letters P.O. Box 604 Glen Rock, NJ 07452

or E-Mail us at reditor@aol.com



Yes, kids, it's the *Scarlet Street* Slightly Mangled Special. We have in our vaults some issues with minor defects: price tags glued on the covers, a folded page, a gypsy curse scrawled on the classifieds . . . nothing too grim, but enough to render them unsuitable for sale at the usual rate.

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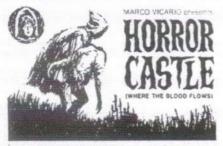
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DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 94 (#DI-94)*

HORROR CASTLE (1963) Christopher Lee, George Riviere, Rossana Podesta. A wonderful, atmospheric horror film. A lady finds herself completely terrified inside her hibbby's creepy, crumbling castle. There's a monster afcot! If seems the ghost of a medieval forfure maniac called "The Punisher" is on the loss and killing off people in a variety of gristy ways. The "rat-eating-the-girls-face" scene is a real eye-opening shocker. Turn your based when the Punisher is unmasked, this one scan of the punisher is unmasked, this one scan of the punisher is unmasked. The punisher is unmasked, this one scan of the punisher is unmasked. The punisher is unmasked, this one scan of the punisher is unmasked. The punisher is unmasked, this one scan of the punisher is unmasked. The punisher is unmasked.

tone scary makeup job. Nice coxx. 1979.

CASTLE OF THE LIVING DEAD (1964) Donald Sutherland. The country Drace receives a company of performers at his mysterious case.

DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 95 (#DI-95)*

THE INDIAN SCARF (1963) Klaus Kinski, Heinz Drache, Corny

Collins. A statesman is murdered by an unknown killer with a slik Indian scarf. The heirs to the dead man's fortune gather at a creepy country or They are bumperd off, one by one, by a mad killer. What is the strange secret of the Indian scarf. Based on an Ecopar Waltace novel. 16mm. FELLOWSHIP DP THE FROG (1980) Carl Lange, Joachim Flochsburger, Sieglired Lowitz. A young American detected becomes involved in a series of ghastly crimes. The only clue to be found is the maincian seal of the White Frog. Another well-done German-made Wallacothniller. 16mm.

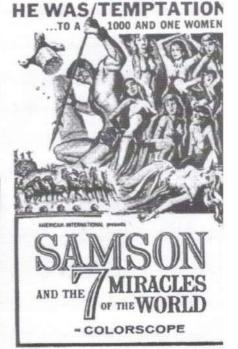
DRIVE-IN COMBO, NO. 96 (#DI-96)*

DEVIL GIRL FROM MARS (1954) Hazel Court, Hugh McDermott. Not the kind of girl you want to get involved with. She's got a killer robot, a giant spaceship, and is taking men back to Mars for breeding purposes. Besides that, she's a real birch, too. A highly explosive cirnax—literally.

Rich, rich camp. From 16mm.

PHANTOM FROM SPACE (1953) Ted Cooper, Noreen Nas Saay, Harry Landers, Michael Mark, Jim Barnon. No classisc, but t good, understed little sei fi opus about a group of people that fine selves pitted against an invisible alien in a lonely observatory. A m climax atop a scaffolding. 16mm.





GORDON SCOTT - YOKO TANI - THE BAXTER

DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 97 (#DI-97)*

SAMSON AND THE 7 MIRACLES OF THE WORLD (1962)

SAMSON AND THE 7 MIRACLES OF THE WORLD (1962)
Gordon Scott, Yoko Tara. Considered one of the best sword a sandal epicof the 60s. Samson fights against a murdering horde of Tartar warriers wittying to save the life of a pretty Chinese princess. A terrific circurat hiss
samson causing an earthquake white digging his way out of a mountain he
was buried alive in. Great fun. Color, from 16mm.
VULCAN, SON OF JUPITER (1982) Rod Plash Ilush, Bella Corte
Gordon Mitchell. Lots of horror and fantasy elements here as Rod flaxes in
muscles and fights off other-worldy menageal. The Greek gods from
Clympus, tizard-like monster men, and strange underground creatures are
featured in this incredibly rare sword and sandal spectacular. Good fun wit
tons of action sequences. Color, 16mm.

.



WALK-IN COMBO NO. 5 (PWI-05)*

CONDEMNED TO LIVE (1935) Raigh Morgan, Mischa Auer, Maxine the Robert Frazer. This well-done poverty row production has a vampire brizing a small European village. This is one of those rare films that rese above its low budget roots. Creepy and atmospheric with Morgan in fine

form as the vampine. 16mm: wimmy and amnospheric with Morgan in fin CRIME OF DR. CRESPI (1935) Enc Von Stroheim, Dwight Frye, Harriet Russell, Paul Guilfoyle. Hospital hornon! A mad doctor plots to get nd of his enemy by burying him alive. Von Stroheim plays his usual egotistical prototype very effectively. This was probably Dwight Frye's biggest role and he's quite good in it. From 16mm.

DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 98 (#DI-98)*

FEAR IN THE NIGHT (1947) DeForest Kelley, Paul Kelly, Am Doran.
Outstanding film noir story about a man who dreams that he commits murder and when he awakens, discovers he may actually have committed if in real life. Creepy and atmosphere with soid portnamices by all. Don't pass this one by, you'll like it a lot. Really creepy in place. Tomm.
HE WALKED BY NIGHT (1947) Rehard Basehart, Soott Brady, Whit Bissell. Basehart portrays one of the most bursts, ingenious kildres ever put on the screen in inits story of the police and their hunt for a mad killer. A first class piece of film noir that is very memorable. Memorable. 16mm.

DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 99 (#DI-99)*

BEAT GIRL (1960 aka WILD FOR KICKS) Gillian Hills, Oliver Reed, BEAT WIRL (1960 alsa WILD FOR KICKS) Gillian Hills, Oliver Reed, Nocelle Adam, Nigel Green. Probably line best British J.D. move ever mack So sleazy it's irresiabile. Hills plays a gorgeous but rebellatous bereage gill who has beatrisk friends, goes to wild paries, and does strip lease bor the local youth. Geraf stake of the 60% scene in England. Ohris plays a sleazy nighticulo owner who knows a good body when he sees one. From 16mm NIGHT OF EVIL (1962) Last Galey. William Campbell. A high school cheerleader gets raped, duringed by her folks, competes for Miss America, unknowning/ marries a hoodkinn, becomes a stripper, and committs amedinable politics. I will be supposed to the stripper and committed amedinable politics that leaves you gapring in amazement? If





DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 100 (#DI-100)*

INVASION OF THE BLOOD FARMERS (1972) Norman Kellen INTERIOR OF UP THE BLOUD PARTMEHS (1972) Norman Kelley, Tanna Huntar, Bruso Detrick, Young women are being brustly mustered in and amund an out-of-the-way New York valley. Behind the helicous crime a modern band of bloodthirsty druids who are seeking a rain blood type it will resurrect their queen in time for a mustistic blood feast. A cheesy, self-70s lose-budget gem that features tashings of hyperbolic gore and lots of sadistic humor. Brind Color, from 35/min.

sadistic humor. Brint: Cotor, from 35mm.

SHRIEK OF THE MUTILATED (1974) Alan Brock, Jernifer Stock, Isems Ellis, Darry Brown. Uncut. What is the gristly, hidden secret of the murdering white yet? A group of college students finds out when they venure to a mysterious island. Low budget, but at times chillingly effective. A Shastolowich type score. Golor, from 35mm.

DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 101 (#DI-101)*

DEVIL'S WEDDING NIGHT (1973) Mark Damon, Sarah Bay, A mar goes to Transylvania searching for a cursed, ancienting. His quest brings him to Castela Dracula, where he falls for a strange, beautiful woman who turns out to be Countees Draculal it seems she's hell-best on bringing old Drac back to life. She succeeds, tool. The man is put under the Countes' else. She succeeds, tool. The man is put under the Countes' else. She is him brother eventually showes up to save him. A cult Eurobertor favorite that teatures very atmospheric and sometimes shooking scenes. Net for the timed, and one to heep alway from your lads. A fair amount of notify and a gory ritual scene. Rated R. Color, 35mm.

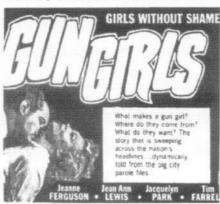
FUTURE WOMAN (1975) George Sanders, Shriely Eaton, Richard Wyler, directed by Jess Franco. A beautiful woman from "Fernival" leads a well trained (and very attractive) fernale army in a plot to take over the world They use the oldest trap in the world as bat: sec. Quite rare and very bizarre. A hoot. Color, from 16mm.



DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 102 (I/DI-102)*

THE FLESH MERCHANT (1955) Joy Reynolds, Guy Manford, Geri Afrifatt, Young girts are led into a tille of shame by organized vice toriss. "A rue story that rocked the nation!". This move's loaded with pure, hysterica amp. From Dan Sonney. One of the best 'Soi's exploitation gerns, Somm GUN GIRLS (1956) Tim Farrell, Jean Ferguson, Jacquelyn Park, Jean

Ann Lewis. A gang of gun totting tables prowl about, holding up everything and everybody. Famell fences their stolen goods and gets his gun moll girl-riend pregnant. An exploitation masterpiece that meets of that magical, Ed Woodsian hitarity. You'd swear that Ed directed it himself. From 35mm.



DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 103 (#DI-103)*

THE MANSTER (1959, aka THE SPLIT) Peter Dyneley, Jane Hylton

THE MANSTER (1959, ata THE SPLTI) Peter Dyneley, Jane Hython. The well-done, chilling tale of a repoter injected with a strange serum by a mad scientist. He finds himself slowly transforming into a homble, two-header menster. The "eye common out of his shoulder scene is a gem. An all English sceaking cast, not dubbed. 16mm. S081

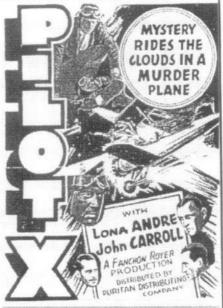
THIS IS NOT A TEST (1962) Seamon Glass, Mary Mortas. Social soft at its best. A state trooper stops people along a highway after hearing news of an impending nuclear attack. Good drama as cast members fight and quarrier over what to do before the bombs hit (and they hit big-time at the end of the film). From 16mm.

DRIVE-IN COMEO NO, 104 (#DI-104)*

ASSIGNMENT TERROR (1969) Michael Rennie, Paul Naschy, Karin Doc. Rennie's an alien mad scientist whose race is helt-bent on conquering Earth. His mission is to renvice Earth's legendary monitors to sessif him in a invasion. His grisly lineup is incredible. Frankerstein, Dracula, the Wenewo and the Murriny. Things start to unrarely when the wereword falls for one of his aides. Not a classic, but still good from and worth having in your collec-tions.

ion. From a stunning 16mm color pint.

MISSION STARDUST (1988) Lang Jeffnis, John Kartsen, Essy tersion. A space here, backed by a team of astronauts, heads to the morecue a blorde alien back who seeks the aid of a blood scientist to ave ber dying race. There's space thrifts a plenty as our heroes light of inarading remarked prepagate robots? The alien base is saved and brought back arth, only to be threatened by enemy spies. Color, 16mm.



WALK-IN COMBO NO. 6 (#WI-06)*

PILOT X (1937 aka DEATH IN THE AIR) John Carrol, Lona Andre, Lona Andre, Lona Andre, Lona Annes. The country is shocked by a series of hombie plane crashes. Authorities are even more horrified to learn that all of the planes were stort down to the planes were stort down to a creeply manisor for the weekend by an eccentric doctor. Hidden commiscered doors, mysterious shadows, lurking figures, lightning storms, etc. are all part of the great title "dark house" chiller. Plas, you'll be treated to sky this gadore as the mad earth allier shoots down he innocent victims in cold blood. A great cast adds to the mysterious goings on. From 35mm.

ROGUE'S TAVERN (1938 Waltace Ford, Barbara Pepper, Joan Woodbury. Despite its title, this is a qualify powerty new horror film about a mad siller idoos in an old hotel on a dark, gloomy right. Is at man or wolf?

Ore the yeary best forgotten horrors. 16mm. PILOT X (1937 aka DEATH IN THE AIR) John Carrol, Lona Andre. son Arres. The country is shocked by a series of homble plane crashes.



DRIVE-IN COMBO NO. 105 (IIDI-105)*

SOS PACIFIC (1959) Endie Constantine, Richard Attenborough, Eva Bartok, Per Angeli. Forget Alphaville, Inis IS the best Constantine film. Eddle's a tough salior who's being flown to the mainland for that. Also aboard is the sleary, snake who turned him in, supicify lighted by Attenborough. During the flight, a fire enupts, injuring the piot. Eddle is torced to land the plane near a remote sland near which they discover, to their hornst, a small socky point on which sits the felf-tale tower of an atom bomb test device. The entire sland will be blown to smitherens in a few hourst. World Shot in English. Vest Vov.III hear Eddle's neal voice (he's go Cur highest recommendation. 18mm.

MA BARKER'S KILLER BROOD (1960) Lurene Tuttle, Tris Coff



THIS OFFER POSITIVELY ENDS AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, NOV. 30, 2001.

the NEWS



HOUND

Fall into The Hound's den once again and grab a folio of facts on upcoming fall frights and frissons. Forward, fellow fiends...

Now Slaying

Lovely young Leelee Sobieski is in double trouble in September, starring in two big-screen thrillers—JOY RIDE from director John Dahl (THE LAST SEDUCTION), and THE GLASS HOUSE, the feature debut of talented TV director Daniel Sackheim (THE X-FILES). Also in September, Eliza Dushku (BUFFY's vampy villainess Faith) stars in the supernatural shocker SOUL SURVIVORS from Stephen Carpenter, writer/director of 1981's THE DORM THAT DRIPPED BLOOD.

A heap of Halloween horrors cram the cinemas in October. Johnny Depp, Heather Graham, and Ian Richardson star in FROM HELL, a Jack the Ripper retelling coscripted by Alan Moore, based on his comic-book series. The William Castle remake 13 GHOSTS materializes, featuring Shannon Elizabeth (SCARY MOVIE) and F. Murray Abraham. Director Ernest Dickerson (DEMON KNIGHT) presents the horror flick BONES, starring Pam Grier and Snoop Dogg. HALLOWEEN: THE HOMECOMING brings Jamie Lee Curtis back to Haddonfield, Illinois for a final (?) fling. And, last but not least, Cassandra Peterson, alias Elvira, busts onto the big screen once again in EL-VIRA'S HAUNTED HILLS, costarring ROCKY HORROR's Richard O'Brien. Hollywood is notorious for juggling release dates, so check your local listings for confirmation.

Déjà Views

Surprise—there are actually some intriguing prospects among Hollywood's never-ending supply of sequels. As The Hound mentioned previously, Warner Bros. has two BATMAN followups in development—BATMAN: YEAR ONE, a flashback tale based on Frank Miller's graphic novel series, and BATMAN BE-YOND, a live-action version of the futuristic TV cartoon show. Now added to the Batting lineup is CATWOMAN, a spin-off feature starring Ashley Judd as Batman's feline foe.

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES is set to start shooting this fall, with Arnold Schwarzenegger scheduled to share the screen with robotic rivals Vin Diesel (PITCH BLACK) and Famke Janssen (X-MEN). The script is by John Brancato and Michael Ferris, writer/producers of NBC's late, great paranormal show THE OTHERS.

THE MATRIX: RELOADED is the first of two sequels to the 1999 action hit—

both in production simultaneously. All the main players are back on board with star Keanu Reeves, including writer/directors Larry and Andy Wachowski.

Of course, there are plenty of remakes in the works—some promising, most doubtful. Fans of Hammer's 1973 kung-fu horror epic LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES may consider hara-kiri on hearing that a comedy remake is in development, starring Tim Allen. Another possible Hammer re-do, THE DEVIL RIDES OUT from director Joe Dante, returns Christopher Lee to his original role of Richeleau. PLANET OF THE APES lead human Mark Wahlberg headlines THE



The Frankenstein Monster (Glenn Strange) is back on DVD in a series of new releases from Universal.

TRUTH ABOUT CHARLIE, director Jonathan Demme's remake of Stanley Donen's stylish 1963 Hitchcock imitation CHARADE. An urban gangland version of Fritz Lang's M is being planned, starring rapper DMX. And—believe it or not—Hong Kong action director John Woo is bringing back TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES. Make of that what you will. Soup, perhaps.

Novel Ideas

Horror and fantasy fans will see some high-profile literary adaptations in theaters in the near future. Sean Connery and Paul Newman are set to star in the Warner Bros. production THE DAMNATION GAME, based on Clive Barker's novel. Stephen King's *Dreamcatcher* will become a Castle Rock film scripted by William Goldman (MISERY) and produced and directed by Lawrence Kasdan (BODY HEAT). TIMELINE, based on the Michael

Crichton tale about time-travelling archeology students, stars DRACULA 2000's Gerard Butler (who is rumored to be the next James Bond) under Richard Donner's direction. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING, the first in director Peter Jackson's lavish trilogy of Tolkien adaptations, debuts in December, with subsequent installments scheduled for 2002 and 2003. Wes Craven has a new big-screen version of Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde on tap. Director Frank Darabont (THE GREEN MILE) will soon be busy helming adaptations of Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 and The Martian Chronicles. QUEEN OF

THE DAMNED, based on Anne Rice's 1988 Vampire Chronicle, will be released by Warners in the spring, and Rice's novel *The Mummy* is being reanimated as a feature project by James Cameron. Jack Finney's fantasy *Time and Again*, which was recently adapted into a stage musical (see last issue's column), might be back on track as a Universal feature through Robert Redford's South Fork Pictures.

On the Haunted Horizon

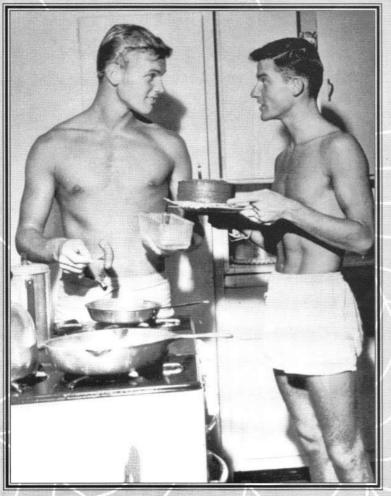
SIGNS is the title of writer/director M. Night Shyamalan's next supernatural thriller, to be released next year by Touchstone. This next opus by the auteur of UNBREAKABLE and THE SIXTH SENSE concerns the appearance of crop circles on a Pennsylvania farm. Rumor has it that Mel Gibson will star.

The movie version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA may finally be unmasked. Variety reports that a sing-through of new Webber-penned tunes for the Warner Bros. movie occurred in London last spring. A new adaptation has been completed by Ben Elton, who is a veteran scripter of TV's BLACKADDER and Webber's collaborator on the current West End musical THE BEAUTIFUL GAME. Now all they need is a budget, a cast, and a chandelier.

A big-screen version of the cult TV series THE PRISONER is likely the next project for TOMB RAIDER director Simon West. West is a huge fan of the 1967 Patrick McGoohan series, and wants to retain the flavor of the original, planning to do location work at Portmerion, the Welsh resort that was the original Village. Once the script is ready, West plans to approach McGoohan to play a role. Russell Crowe is the rumored frontrunner to portray Number 6.

GLADIATOR may have spurred a return to ancient historical epics. SILENCE OF THE LAMBS screenwriter Ted Tally has been hired by producer Dino De Laur-

Continued on page 16



TAB: Say, Roddy, have you seen the swell Discussion Boards over on the Scarlet Website? You can sign on and talk about classic Universal Horrors, Hammer Films, Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan, Alfred Hitchcock, Tarzan of the Apes, The Thin Man, Jack the Ripper, and just about anything else that comes to mind! Why, heck, you can even talk about sexual subtexts in our old pictures...

RODDY: Subtexts? What subtexts?

Hot Dog! You asked for 'em, you got 'em—and they really take the cake! Nothing holds a candle to the brand new Discussion Boards at . . .

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www.scarletstreet.com

Website designed by John E. Payne

A HARD DAY'S FRIGH

Zacherley in Pepperland

by Richard Scrivani

They say (and we all know who "they" are) that there is faces every only six degrees of separation between ourselves and now and aganyone we can conjure up. For instance, think of any indiain, show-vidual and we should only have to make one or two coning a meetnections to link us to that person through people we al- ing between ready know. Some unlikely combinations can spring up him when this theory is applied, and I ran into one not long

ago: Zacherley and The Beatles!

A few weeks ago I was enjoying the recent Varese Ringo looks Sarabande CD ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN (music from the original fifties TV series), nostalgically recalling practically every note, when up came a cue ("Spreading Misterioso") that seemed doubly familiar. I couldn't figure out why. Then it clicked in—it was the music used in the background for the "Roland" segment featured in the video THE ZACHERLEY ARCHIVES! I quickly called Zach (pictured below with his favorite mag) and played it to him over the phone, expecting him to remember it. He didn't, of course, but he added a very interesting factoid.

"You know who picked out all that music?" he asked.

"It was none other than Richard Lester!

Lester, as everyone knows, was the director of the Beatles' first two films, A HARD DAYS NIGHT (1964) and HELP! (1965), as well as the antiwar film HOW I WON THE WAR (1967), featuring John Lennon. "He worked as the music director and was in charge of the music library at WCAU in the fifties," Zach continued. "He worked on the cowboy show ACTION IN THE AFTERNOON, and also ROLAND. He was already talking about leaving and moving to England so he could move on to bigger and better things." (It was Zacherley's casting as an undertaker in one episode of ACTION IN THE AFTER-

NOON that gave birth to his more durable "Cool Ghoul" persona as Roland and, after his move to New York, Zacherley.) This

news spurred me on to whatever you are! about a photo that sur-

and Ringo Starr, which delighted to be chatting with our favorite hor-

ror host. "Oh, that was from a party, probably through WPLJ, for the release of his latest album." (John Zacherle, as New York fans remember, enjoyed a lengthy stint as a disc jockey, first on WNEW-FM in the late sixties, then at WPLJ in the seventies.) "The interesting thing is that Ringo loved "Dinner with Drac' and still knew all the words. The record, as I've mentioned, was banned in England, but he sure heard it. He said they all loved limericks in those days, and the song was really a collection of about five limericks."

Outlawed in the British Isles because of lyrics considered "too gruesome" (how things have changed!), "Dinner with Drac" was likely heard by Ringo on one of the many pirate stations broadcasting offshore and outside the jurisdiction of the BBC. One of the most popular, "Radio Luxembourg," was mentioned more than once by the Beatles during early interviews with the American press.

So the next time "they" underestimate the impact of our favorite merchant of menace, remind them that our man Zach worked with the Fab Four's future film director when the Liverpool Lads were still in their teens, and that his hit record from 1958 reached the ears of a young Ringo Starr. Now that's an exciting six degrees of separation-





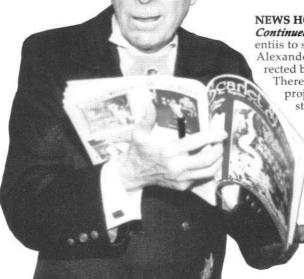
entiis to script an elaborate biography of Alexander the Great, possibly to be directed by GLADIATOR's Ridley Scott. There's also a competing Alexander project at Warner Bros., tentatively starring Jude Law. It will be interesting to see whether either of these films acknowledge Alexander's relationship with lover Hephaestion amid all the trumpeting elephants

Sunnydale Doings

and butch Macedonians.

The hit TV series BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER changes its address this fall, shifting from the WB network over to UPN. BUFFY's sister show ANGEL, meanwhile, has been renewed for a third season by the WB and remains on its original network. As for dear departed Buffy, The Hound suspects she'll be resurrected quite soon in new sixth-season adventures, which are rumored to include an all-singing episode (the horror!) and a visit by Shannen Doherty (the horror!), herself recently departed from the cast of CHARMED.

In other BUFFY news, creator Joss Whedon will adapt the show as a Saturday morning animated series to premiere on Fox in the fall of 2002. The proposed BUFFY cartoon sets The Slaver and her pals back at Sunnydale High for more



Zach

Hellmouth hijinks. Acclaimed comic-book writer Jeph Loeb is coexecutive producer. Longtime comics fan Whedon has also found time to write a series for Dark Horse-an eight-issue cycle entitled FRAY, about a far-future slayer. It debuted at local comic shops in June.

And Mr. Whedon has still more up his spooky sleeve. He's planning a spinoff show to star Anthony Steward Head in his role as "slayer watcher" Rupert Giles. Whedon and the BBC are developing the six-episode miniseries, tentatively titled THE WATCHER, in which Giles solves occult mysteries in his native England.

An alert to BUFFY newbies: the FX cable channel begins weeknightly reruns in September, beginning with the very first episode.

TV Frights for Fall

TWIN PEAKS with werewolves? That seems to be the atmosphere surrounding WOLF LAKE, the new CBS fall series from producer John Leekley (KIN-DRED: THE EMBRACED). Lou Diamond Phillips stars as the sheriff of a Pacific Northwest town plagued by mysterious wolf attacks. Hope he's got his silver ammunition handy.

SMALLVILLE is the WB network's new fall show blending the SUPER-MAN legend with the sci-fi teen angst of their drama ROSWELL (which, like BUFFY, is migrating to UPN in the fall). Former fashion model Tom Welling stars as Clark Kent, the Smallville high school student with a super secret. Kristen Kreuk plays Clark's crush Lana Lang, Annette O'Toole (Lana in 1983's SUPERMAN III) plays Martha Kent, and DUKES OF HAZ-ZARD star (and erstwhile Broadway performer) John Schneider plays Jona-MATED SERIES) appears as industrial-

ist Lionel Luthor, father to the prematurely bald Lex (played by URBAN LEG-END's Michael Rosenbaum).

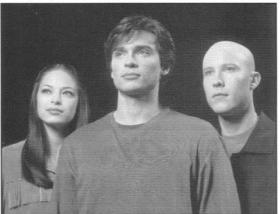
Other shows debuting this fall include THE TICK, Fox's half-hour, live-action comedy based on Ben Edlund's comic book, and ENTERPRISE, UPN's latest in the eternal STAR TREK franchise. Returning in the fall for another season are the Fox shows DARK ANGEL and THE X-FILES (minus David Duchovny), the WB network's CHARMED (with Rose McGowan of SCREAM joining the cast), and the monster-buster romp SPECIAL UNIT 2 on UPN. Fox has canceled FREAKYLINKS and X-FILES spinoff THE LONE GUN-MEN, and ALL SOULS and 7 DAYS are missing from UPN's fall schedule.

Stephen King's ominous presence will be felt throughout the new TV season. ROSE RED, an original King-penned miniseries about a haunted mansion, airs on ABC in February. UPN is readying their mid-season replacement series THE DEAD ZONE, based on King's 1979 novel, starring Anthony Michael Hall, Michael Moriarty, and Nicole de Boer. Marguerite Moreau portrays Charlie McGee, the firebrand of King's Firestarter, in the Sci-Fi Channel miniseries FIRESTARTER:

THE NEXT CHAPTER, which also features Malcolm McDowell and Dennis Hopper. (Sounds like Sci-Fi is hoping to spin off its own "supergirl" series a la BUFFY, DARK ANGEL, WITCHBLADE and ABC's new spy-chick show ALIAS.)

Esteemed science fiction author Ursula K. LeGuin will be almost as well-represented as King this coming season. The Arts & Entertainment Network presents a new production of THE LATHE OF HEA-VEN, and the Sci-Fi Channel plans miniseries adaptations of Earthsea and The Left Hand of Darkness. Also coming up on Sci-Fi: a long-form presentation of Kim Stanley Robinson's Red Mars, and a two-hour telefilm of The Illustrated Man, scripted by author Ray Bradbury.

EARTH ANGELS is the tentative title of a proposed NBC series being developed by Anne Rice. The show, in which angels protect humanity in a cosmic battle between good and evil, will hopefully progress further than Rice's last TV pro-



Before Metropolis, there was SMALLVILLE. Tom Welling (Center) stars as the precostumed than Kent. John Glover (the voice of Boy of Steel, with Kristen Kreuk as Lana Lang The Riddler on BATMAN: THE ANI- and Michael Rosenbaum as Lex Luthor.

ject—the CBS ghost-cop series RAG AND BONE, which never got beyond the 1997 pilot movie starring former Superman Dean Cain and Robert Patrick, Coproducing with Rice on EARTH ANGELS is genre veteran Thania St. John of VR.5, THE VISITOR, and ROSWELL.

New York City-area horror fans of a certain age will fondly recall the Saturday night monster movie showcase CREA-TURE FEATURES on WNEW-TV Channel 5. (Announcer Lou Steele, who hosted the show as The Creep, sadly passed away earlier this year.) Now the pay-cable sister channels HBO and Cinemax are taking up the CREATURE FEATURES mantle with a series of newly produced horror movies inspired by the old Sam Arkoff AIP programmers of the fifties. The series starts this fall and includes updated versions of THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED, HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER, THE SPIDER, and TEENAGE CAVEMAN.

The Wicked Stage

Frank Wildhorn, creator of Broadway's shuttered pop musical JEKYLL & HYDE, debuts his newest stage production, THE MUSICAL DRACULA, at Southern California's La Jolla Playhouse this fall. Composer Wildhorn is joined on the project by SUNSET BLVD. Tony winners Christopher Hampton and Don Black provide the book and lyrics respectively. Preview performances of THE MUSICAL DRAC-ULA begin October 2, 2001; opening night is scheduled for October 14. For more information, visit www.lajollaplayhouse. com or call the box office at 858-550-1010. Atlantic Records is slated to release a CD of the score sometime this year.

The West End's long-long-running ghostly play THE WOMAN IN BLACK had a brief Off-Broadway run in June and July at the Minetta Lane Theatre. Despite its untimely New York departure, this wonderfully eerie play continues to be a fixture at The Fortune Theatre in London, and is also being staged at Houston's Alley Theatre (713-228-8421) through August. (The television version by QUA-TERMASS scribe Nigel Kneale is worth

catching, too.)

The Home Video Vault

Universal Home Video serves up five monstrous double features new to DVD: sinister siblings DRACULA'S DAUGHTER/SON OF DRACULA, allstar soirees FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN/HOUSE OF FRAN-KENSTEIN, Ygor doubleheader SON OF FRANKENSTEIN/THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, Kharis combos THE MUMMY'S HAND/THE MUM-MY'S TOMB and THE MUMMY'S GHOST/THE MUMMY'S CURSE, and the toothsome twosome WEREWOLF OF LONDON/SHE-WOLF OF LON-DON. Each classic coupling, sadly lacking the deft documentaries and superb audio commentaries produced by horror expert David J. Skal, can be had for \$29.98.

Anthony Hopkins' grisly return engagement as HANNIBAL (and don't say Hannibal who?) is now available on VHS and in a special DVD edition from MGM/UA. Also brand new to DVD: a widescreen edition of the original IN-VASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (Republic), Clive Barker's 1990 horror epic NIGHTBREED (Warner Bros.), John Schlesinger's 1976 driller thriller MARA-THON MAN (Paramount), a boxed set of the SCREAM trilogy (Dimension), and the 1966 BATMAN movie (Fox), featuring audio commentary by Adam West and Burt Ward, Zowie!

In September, Fox releases DVD boxed sets of THE OMEN trilogy (\$99.98) and THE FLY (\$29.98 each for separate double-feature sets of the fifties and eighties versions). Fox also debuts DVDs of PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE, THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE, and a special edition of Mel Brooks' YOUNG FRANK-ENSTEIN. Paramount, meanwhile, premieres the George Pal doomsday epic WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE.

STAR WARS EPISODE ONE: THE PHANTOM MENACE comes to DVD in October in a two-disc special edition that includes over six hours of supplemental material. Universal unwraps THE MUM

Continued on page 19



The Rise of the House of HARRINGTON

Curtis Harrington Meets Edgar Allan Poe

Reported by Ken Hanke

orror/fantasy filmmaker emeritus Curtis Harrington—a figure too long absent from the genre-is marking his return to the form with his new version of Edgar Allan Poe's 1839 classic "The Fall of the House of Usher." Scarlet Street's Richard Valley and Tom Amorosi lunched with Harrington at this year's Fanex convention in Baltimore, where he told them about his new film. Realizing that this was news of some note to genre fans, they set up this interview especially for our readers

Scarlet Street: What's "The Fall of the House of Usher" about - or rather, what's your film of it about?

Curtis Harrington: First of all, the title is USHER, not FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER. It's based on the famous story of Edgar Allan Poe-an adaptation that I wrote and directed. It's a short film, running 36 minutes. In my opinion, when people take Poe's stories and try to expand them into feature length, they vitiate the stories very much. Novels usually lend themselves better to feature filmmaking. With this film, I've tried to duplicate the essential short format. The unusual thing about this adaptation is that I've brought it into the contemporary world. The story takes place in modern contemporary times.

SS: Did you shoot on tape or film?

CH: I shot it on 35mm film. I'm in the post-production area now. I'm waiting for my composer to finish the score, and I hope to do the final sound mix before the end of August. He's a young composer. He came to me and said he admired my films and wanted to do a score and pick up all the expenses. It's a synthesized score, but it sounds pretty good. It doesn't have the fullness I'd like, but then it's a short film it's more of a chamber film, so it's as well it has a chamber music score to it. Incidentally, the cameraman on USHER is Gary Graver, the cameraman who worked with Orson Welles in his last years. He worked on Welles' final film that has not been finished yet, THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WIND, and he also did F FOR

right hand on the film. I hope to have the first answer print

ready in the fall. People at the American Cinematheque have promised a premiere

SS: What plans do you have for it afterwards? CH: It's going to be a festival piece. That's the main venue for such a film. I assume it will be entered in some of these short film festivals that are around and also the short film division of other festivals. I hope it will stimulate festivals to show a retrospective of some of my other films in connection with USHER.

SS: That makes sense. Who's in the film? **CH:** I appear in it. I play Roderick Usher. There are no names in the cast. You know, I began my career many years ago making short 16mm films on my own. This is exactly the same kind of film.

SS: Do you have any plans to release USHER on tape or DVD, so that people who don't get to film festivals will get to see it?

CH: Yes, eventually. I hope I can have a little cottage industry and have a website-a little mail order business, making it available. I'd like to make it available on video, definitely

SS: Perhaps this will lead to you being able to film more of your long-cherished projects.

CH: Stranger things have happened, yes. You make something and it stimulates new interest. Those stills I gave to Rich-

ard-one of them is me made up as Roderick Usher, and the other is a very amusing candid picture of me at work on the film, all made up and in costume, but setting up a shot with the camera. And this is strangely apt, because I play Roderick Usher as a recluserather as he is in the story-but a modern recluse whose eccentricity it is to dress in the style of the 19th Century. An amusing incongruity, I think.

SS: Are you pleased with the film?

CH: Yes, I'm pleased. I've shown it to a few people-very close friends-on video. It was edited on the AVID, so I have a video copy of it with temporary sound effects and temporary music and titles. I've had a favorable response. So I'm pleased about that.

SS: Well, we look forward to seeing USHER

one day

CH: Well, you will-that's for sure! After I left Baltimore, I traveled for the rest of the month. I went to Philadelphia where I visited the Poe house, and that was a very interesting experience. Then I went to Manhattan and out to Long Island to the Hamptons, and then I went to Boston. And while I was in Boston, I had a meeting with the people at the Harvard Film Archives, and they're interested in possibly doing a retrospective and a showing of USHER.

SS: Wonderful! You certainly sound enthusiastic about the entire project.

CH: Yes, well, it's a very personal film. I have used the story and the situations to tell, in my own way as a creative enterprise, my musings-whatever you want to call it—dealing with the themes of art and death. I use poetry as a metaphor for art in general in the film, but it is intended as a metaphor. The film is not about poetry. It's about art, though on the surface it's just about poetry.



Night of Dark Shadows Sees Daylight

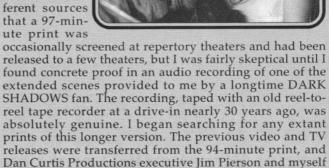
by Drew Sullivan

omething strange has been found in a vault, and this time it isn't Barnabas Collins! In fact, that famous television bloodsucker is nowhere around, since he played no part in NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS (1971), the second and last feature film based on the phenomenally successful soap opera DARK SHADOWS, created by producer/director Dan Curtis. The "something strange"—astonishing, really—is 35 minutes of lost footage!

NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS, a Gothic ghost story and sequel to 1970's HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS (which did star Jonathan Frid as Barnabas), was severely recut at the 11th hour by order of MGM studio head James Aubrey. The resulting 94-minute film, though a moderate commercial success, was panned by most critics who—unaware of the studio-imposed hatchet job—complained that the story was muddled and confusingly told.

Genre historian/film restorer Darren Gross discovered the film—now the property of Turner Entertainment—in late July after several months of effort in order

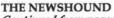
to gain access to the Turner vaults. "I had heard from a number of different sources that a 97-minute print was



felt that if we could find this longer print, we could bring

it to Turner's attention so it could be released on video.

Continued on page 77



Continued from page 17

MY RETURNS the same month on DVD and VHS, and shakes loose the direct-to-video TREMORS 3: BACK TO PERFECTION. And watch for A&E's AVENGERS '68 featuring John Steed and Tara King, and Disney's two-disc collector's edition of the classic SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS.

Jim Carrey gets stuffed in lots of stockings once HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS (Universal) debuts on video in November. Available from Fox on DVD at the same time is a special THX edition of the 1988 Lucasfilm fantasy WILLOW, and the complete fourth season of THE X FILES. Paramount's special director's DVD edition of STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE is also scheduled for November release.

British BUFFY fans have long enjoyed the first two seasons on DVD, as well as VHS box sets of ANGEL. It's rumored that Fox will finally make BUFFY and ANGEL available Stateside on DVD by the end of the year. Also watch for episodes of TWIN PEAKS from Artisan.

Available from those happy Anglophiles at Acorn Media are boxed sets of TOMMY & TUPPENCE: PARTNERS IN CRIME (VHS) and CADFAEL (DVD). Each set contains about five hours worth of mysterious diversion for \$49.95.

Elite Entertainment's Drive-In Discs (\$29.95 each) let you relive the vintage drive-in experience on DVD with a double-feature of fifties sci-fi flicks, plus cartoons, vintage shorts, and a secondary audio track with such ozoner ambiance as cricket chirps, slamming car doors, and hooting hecklers. Volume One features AIP favorites THE SCREAMING SKULL and THE GIANT LEECHES, and Volume

Two presents THE WASP WOMAN and THE GIANT GILA MONSTER.

He's synonymous with John Steed of THE AVENGERS, but Patrick Macnee also has a connection to The Great Detective, having portrayed Dr. John Watson three times—and Sherlock Holmes once—on the small screen. Macnee returns to the scene of the crimes as host of IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, a 45-minute video tour of Victorian London. Macnee visits Holmes' haunts—and those of his friends, foes and illustrious clients—and presents vintage film clips of Sherlockian appearances. Visit www.chiptaylor.com for more information.

Speaking of matters Sherlockian, MPI Home Video has released Volume Two of the Granada series starring Jeremy Brett and David Burke. This edition contains two episodes (THE CROOKED MAN and THE SPECKLED BAND), and it can be had for \$14.95.

Perilous Publications

The Cushing Confidential is a labor-of-love fanzine dedicated to The Gentle Man of Horror, Peter Cushing. New York fan Christopher Gullo has assembled interviews, movie and DVD reviews, and contributions by Patrick Macnee and our own Forrest J Ackerman into his 50-page inaugural issue. For more information, contact Mr. Gullo at 34 Steven Place, Smithtown NY 11787, or at cgullo@juno.com.

Gone, but never to be forgotten: Count Dracula Society founder Dr. Donald A. Reed; cartoonist Hank Ketcham; actor/calypsonian Sir Lancelot Pinard; guitarist Chet Atkins; singers Perry Como, John Hartford, John Lee Hooker, Emma Kelly, Kirsty MacColl, Susannah McCorkle, John Phillips, and Joey Ramone; Broadway cos-

tume designer Freddy Wittop; playwrights John Herbert and Jerry Sterner; TV hosts Morton Downey Jr. and Lou Steele; authors Douglas Adams, R. Chetwynd-Hayes, and Robert Ludlum; playwright/actor Jason Miller; film composer Piero Umiliani: voice actor Norma Mac-Millan; stunt performer Russell Saunders; visual effects artist Ross Hoffman; cinematographer John A. Alonzo; screenwriters Leo Marks, George F. Slavin, Larry Tucker, and Michael Valle; animation titan William Hanna; Disney animator Norman Hall Wright; producers Charles B. Fitzsimons, Jack Haley Jr., Sy Weintraub, and Sam Wiesenthal; directors Robert Enrico, Ken Hughes, Giacomo Gentilomo, Michael Ritchie, and Ralph Thomas; writer/producer/director Alex Nicol; actors Lewis Arquette, Jean-Pierre Aumont, Sandy Baron, Corinne Calvet, Andrew Cassese, Imogene Coca, Peggy Converse, Anthony Dexter, Dale Evans, Lou Fant, Gail Fisher, Arlene Francis, Brother Theodore Gottlieb, David Graf, Jack Lemmon, Jimmy Logan, Scott Marlowe, Claudia Martin, Whitman Mayo, Virginia O'Brien, Carroll O'Connor, Nancy Parsons, Nyree Dawn Porter, Anthony Quinn, Rockets Redglare, Norman Rodway, Sir Harry Secombe, Joan Sims, Ann Sothern, Anthony Steel, Beatrice Straight, Harry Townes, Joan Vohs, Deborah Walley, Len Wayland, Toby Wing and Edward Winter, DÍNG DONG SCHOOL's Miss Frances R. Horwich, Christopher Hewitt, and Virgin Records executive-and Scarlet Street's fond Forum family member-Rick Squillante.

Send The Hound your questions, comments and compliments via email to TheNewsHound@yahoo.com.



Scarlet Street's DVD and Laser Review

PIT AND THE PENDULUM MGM Home Entertainment \$14.95

Englishman Francis Barnard (John Kerr) arrives at the castle of the reclusive Spanish nobleman Nicholas Medina (Vincent Price) to investigate the untimely death of his sister, Elizabeth (Barbara Steele), who is Medina's wife. Barnard also makes the acquaintances of Medina's young sister, Catherine (Luana Anders), and the family physician, Dr. Charles Leon (Anthony Carbone). It soon becomes obvious that Elizabeth perished under mysterious circumstances. Barnard's abrasive search leaves no stone unturned-not even the crypt in which his sister has been interred! Medina eventually succumbs to madness when Dr. Leon and the not-sodead Elizabeth maneuver to terrify him out of his wits. The trauma catapults the nobleman into a frenzied recreation of his own diseased roots.

PIT AND THE PENDULUM (1961) initially unspools as a virtual remake of director Roger Corman's previous Edgar Allan Poe adaptation, THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER (1960). Corman repeats many of USHER's hallmarks, including matte painting exteriors, sets draped with cobwebs, and tinted flashback/fantasy sequences. Screenwriter Richard Matheson ups the ante by subjecting Medina to two adulterous triangles that seem as inspired by Freud as by Poe.

Price's preceding enactment of Roderick Usher was that of a melancholy aesthete. As Medina, the actor chortlingly launches his own inquisition in what may represent the most controversial lead performance of the entire AIP Poe series. Some feel that he goes over the top, but I enjoy the exaggerated mannerisms that Price employs to suggest that Medina has "become" his murderous father. Corman goes too far by having Medina suddenly appear in his father's torture costume

during the climactic pendulum scene; Price has ably demonstrated, through body language and facial expression, that the nobleman has mentally regressed to his horrific past.

Corman contributes an amusing audio commentary track, in which he rhapsodizes about integrating Freudian symbolism into the production. He entertainingly describes the making of the picture, although it's apparent that he hasn't watched it of late. He mistakenly lists the composer as "Ronnie" Stein, when Les Baxter actually wrote PIT's percussive score. Corman speaks warmly about his cast and crew, but doesn't mention that Barbara Steele was dubbed by another actress. He remains modestly pleased with

his accomplishment, a sentiment that the listener will likely share.

The disc also includes a nearly five-minute television prologue that was used for two commercial network airings circa 1968. Luana Anders, reprising Catherine Medina, wanders through a madhouse populated with inmates portraved by Martine Bartlett and Sid Haig, as well as extras (including a dwarf in a jester's suit) that resemble survivors of Corman's THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (1964). My contemporaries always disbelieved my recollection of this rare footage, but its inclusion here proves the story that I told them was true.

MGM's DVD is successful for the most part. Corman's handsome cinematography is presented at 2:35-1. Fleshtones and color values are generally good, but visual grain becomes noticeable during rapid movements by cast or camera. Occasional artifacting is also present, but the source material itself remains satisfactory, given its vintage. A widescreen trailer narrated by Paul Frees is also included.

—John F. Black

X-MEN (SPECIAL EDITION) 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment \$22.98

In the world of Marvel Comics' popular *X-Men* series, "normal" humans regard mutants-people whose genes give them superpowers and sometimes freakish physiques-as outcasts to be feared, outlawed, even hunted down and killed. The X-Men are mutants who have banded together under the leadership of a psychic and telekinetic, Professor Charles Xavier, who has trained them to harness and use their powers for good, even in defense of the humans who reject them. The X-Men comics have spoken powerfully to teens, ethnic minorities, gays, women, anyone feeling alienated. But all is not gloom and doom in the mutant world; the Marvel comics are also whopping good stories, written and drawn with humor and flair, to be enjoyed by anyone in search of a compelling tale.

Which brings us to last summer's inevitable (given the comics' popularity and status) X-MEN movie. It became one of the season's bonafide hits, and not just because the comics have such a loval following. X-MEN, the movie, is a whopping good tale, too. Writer David Hayter and director Bryan Singer (1995's THE USUAL SUSPECTS) boiled the comic's dozens of characters down to a select core, introducing most of them through the eyes of Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) and Rogue (Anna Paquin), the newest recruits to Professor Xavier's School for Gifted Children. This movie is obviously meant, given its introductory setup and its open ending, to be the first in a new X-MEN movie franchise.



Singer's mantra during the shoot was to "keep it real," and the result is a film whose supposedly outlandish characters seem absolutely believable and human in every way. Like the comics, X-MEN is about conflicting emotions, philosophies, and relationships, the consequences of prejudice, and trying to make sense of one's place in the world. The scenes between Wolverine and Roque are especially engaging; Jackman and Paquin have wonderful chemistry together. The film never descends into preachiness and displays a wicked sense of ironic humor. The pace is swift, and—of course—there are several major action sequences.



X-MEN does have flaws. With so many characters, some are not as fully developed as the others. The final battle atop the Statue of Liberty seems singularly studiobound (probably due to the \$75 million budget, low for an action and effects-laden film) and is not the team effort it would have been in the comics. Some of the dialogue falls flat. Wispy, stiff Halle Berry is utterly inadequate as the regal Storm, and James Marsden as X-Men captain Cyclops evinces little authority, especially next to Australian breakout star Hugh Jackman's electrifying Wolverine (arguably the comics' most popular character). On the other hand, Patrick Stewart seems born to play Professor Xavier, as does Ian McKellan to play Magneto, Xavier's old friend and nemesis. Singer caught the teenage Anna Paquin, so radiant as Rogue, on the cusp between girlhood and womanhood. Famke Janssen is fine as Jean Grey, Cyclops' lover and fellow X-Man. Magneto's henchmen, Sabretooth and Toad, are played to the hilt by, respectively, Tyler Mane and Ray Park (aka Darth Maul in 1999's THE PHANTOM MENACE). Rebecca Romign-Stamos is a sensual standout as Magneto's paramour and enforcer, the very naked, very blue shapeshifter Mystique. Bruce Davison contributes his usual solid work as antiMutant senator Robert Kelly.

X-MEN on DVD is presented in a gor-geous anamorphic 2:35:1 transfer with a 5.1 Dolby Digital soundtrack. (Singer decided against a second DTS soundtrack in order to free up space on the disc and allow for the best visual quality possible.) Alas, there is no director commentary; instead we have excerpts from Singer's visit to THE CHARLIE ROSE SHOW, definitely worth watching, but why didn't we get the entire interview? Extra features include an extended branching version of the movie with deleted (and non-anamorphic) scenes, which also may be accessed separately; the Fox special THE MUTANT WATCH; Jackman's screen test; an art gallery; animatics; trailers and TV spots; and two Easter Eggs. (Click on the rose and on the dogtags.) The DVD package consists of a silver cardboard case and cardboard slipcase with the X-MEN logo. Very attractive, but probably easy to dam-

-Paula Vitaris

THE VENGEANCE OF SHE Anchor Bay Entertainment \$14.98

Hammer, never one to shy away from making money on a sequel, followed up production on the fairly classic SHE 1965) with the far less ambitious THE VENGEANCE OF SHE (1967). H. Rider Haggard had himself provided the impetus for such a move with his own literary endeavor, Ayesha: The Return of She (1905). Hammer's film had little to do with literature, however; rather, the famous film company chose to plot a new course for the legendary queen by reversing the original story, this time having the immortal Killikrates (John Richardson) searching for the reincarnation of his lost love. Unfortunately, Hammer spent as little money as possible in executing this ingenious idea and bringing it to the screen.

Olinka Berova (the anglicized name of Olga Schoberova) stars as Carol, a beautiful young woman who suffers from amnesia. She hears voices in her head calling her to the mysterious East. When she turns and veers off in another direction, she suffers terrible headaches. Edward Judd is Philip Smith, a doctor who takes a liking to Carol (could libido have anything to do with it?) and decides to travel with her to unknown destinations. Their travels are upset with all manner of peril, natural and supernatural.

The film is dull throughout, but it really falters when the duo enter the lost city of Kuma, which consists of a couple of columns and a nice marble floor. Richardson is the dashing Killikrates of the previous film, though this time around he inexplicably speaks with a different voice. Add to this the fact that Berova is likewise dubbed and the film develops an air of cheapness remarkable even by Hammer's lowest standards. (Let's "credit" this to the involvement of American film company Seven Arts, which contributed to a period in Hammer history when bustlines were more important than budgets.)

Despite terrible direction from Cliff Owen, best known for fantasies of a fleshly nature—he was responsible for NO SEX, PLEASE—WE'RE BRITISH (1973) and THE BAWDY ADVENTURES OF TOM JONES (1976)—and a script rather on the slow side, VENGEANCE does have its rewards. A particularly nasty but effective scene involving black magic is one of the most engaging and realistic ceremonies caught on screen, and parts of it were later used to add credibility to Hammer's terrific TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA (1969). Add some typically deft performances from such top-notch British thespians as Judd, Noel Willman, Andre Morell, Colin Blakely, and Derek Godfrey, and the movie is almost saved. Almost.

Anchor Bay cannot be faulted for their DVD presentation of this lesser Hammer title. The transfer is superb, far superior to the faded Castle Films PAL video release in England. The rich Technicolor has never looked better, particularly the blues, reds, and yellows. The widescreen format is appropriately done at a 1.66:1 aspect ratio, and the disc also contains the theatrical trailer and two television spots. Perhaps unnecessary is the repeat presentation of the WORLD OF HAMMER episode which can also be found on the discs for THE VIKING QUEEN and PREHISTORIC WOMEN (both 1967). Purists will



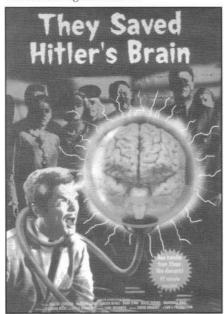
be happy to know that the soundtrack remains in mono and hasn't been reworked for Dolby Digital 5.1.

–Chris Workman

THEY SAVED HITLER'S BRAIN Rhino Home Video \$19.95

Long a staple of Worst Film lists, THEY SAVED HITLER'S BRAIN is comprised of two parts quite obviously removed from each other in years and technical competency; each has somewhat uncertain origins. The earlier part, possibly an independent production, was directed by David Bradley, who helmed Charlton Heston's student films of PEER GYNT (1941) and JULIUS CAESAR (1950), and photographed by Stanley Cortez, whose work graced THE MAGNIFICENT AM-BERSONS (1942), FLESH AND FANTASY (1943), and Universal's 1941 go at THE BLACK CAT. The newer portions are usually identified as the work of film students. The cast includes Carlos Rivas

(1957's THE BLACK SCORPION), billed below Walter Stocker and Audrey Caire but in larger type. The supporting cast is filled with "Who-is-that?" faces from fif-ties and sixties film and TV roles; only Nestor Paiva is identifiable from appearances in genre favorites such as the first two Black Lagoon entries.



The earlier footage was apparently filmed circa 1963 under the less plot-revealing title of MADMAN OF MANDOR-AS and may or may not have ever been released. The preposterous premise involves Nazis ensconced in a banana republic, preparing a new attempt at world domination under the orders of the still living head of the Fuhrer (insert preferred Head of State joke here). Actually, it's no loopier than some of the other livinghead films that had a vogue around this

Acting throughout the picture is uniformly good, a factor that has to be attributed to director Bradley. Paiva, playing a sort of Latino Boss Hogg, is his usual col-orful self. Stocker and Caire (who bears an alarming resemblance to Donna Reed) are on a par with such other B leads as Rex Reason and Faith Domergue. Carlos Rivas is particularly notable in a dual role as brothers, all but unrecognizable in moustache and artfully gray-streaked hair as the older sibling.

Much of the criticism aimed at the film's ineptitude and incomprehensible plot is really prompted by the ghastly newer footage. The editing is fairly clever in melding the two, but cannot overcome the radical difference every time Cortez's ripely dramatic lighting butts up against a scene obviously lit by one of those home-movie flood-lamp rigs. And everything else—from the bad sound recording and clunky casting to the inane and convoluted scripting-is a complete disaster. Howlers in the Bradley section, by contrast, mostly center on Hitler's head, which is plopped in an oversized beaker atop some machinery; when it's

removed for a road trip, there are no tubes for blood circulation or any connections to the machinery. (By contrast, the Jan-in-a-pan setup of 1962's THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE is a marvel of scientific accuracy.) And in several key scenes, the actor's head is inexplicably replaced with an unconvincingly inert prop. Whether actor or effigy, it just plain looks ludicrous!

Still and all, Bradley's portion is hardly the worst living-head movie—an honor reserved for the deliciously excruciating MAN WITHOUT A BODÝ (1957)—and could have stood alone as a slightly under-length but competently helmed thriller without the addition of any extra scenes. Ironically, while not exactly great, it would not be memorably bad enough to have gained the notoriety it has without that footage.

Rhino's DVD has no extras beyond chapter stops and a delightful Monty Python-like animated menu with Hitler's head bouncing and jabbering atop his machine. The print, billed as remastered from the original elements, is often badly speckled and has one patch of wobbly sound. The full-frame print is from the complete 91 minute version.

-Harry Long

THE EXORCIST Warner Home Video \$24.98

Everyone's favorite heartwarming, coming-of-age tale of a young girl facing her inner demons is back—bigger and louder than ever! Since its initial release in 1973, there has been much speculation and debate about an alleged longer, first cut of writer/producer William Peter Blatty's and director William Friedkin's horror masterpiece-the bulk of said speculation and debate coming perhaps from the filmmakers themselves. For years, Blatty has lamented the loss of the original cut he approved, a cut Friedkin all but denied ever existed. Yet last year, by the powers of some dark, mysterious forceperhaps even those of the dread demon Pazuzu—the world had unleashed upon it what is probably the closest to that elusive original cut anyone will ever see.

Released in 2000 as THE EXORCIST: THE VERSION YOU'VE NEVER SEEN (we can be thankful it wasn't billed as "E2K"), with 11 minutes of newly-restored footage and a booming, remixed soundtrack, the movie enjoyed a successful theatrical run, and an introduction to a whole new generation of horror fans.

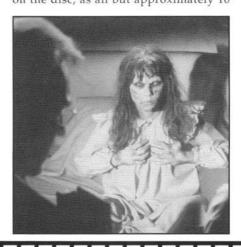
As most everyone knows, the story based on Blatty's bestselling 1971 novel-follows the misadventures of actress Chris MacNeil (Ellen Burstyn) and her 12vear-old daughter, Regan (Linda Blair), living in the Georgetown area of Washington, DC, while Chris stars in a new film. Regan develops what at first seems to be an illness, but when medical teams are left baffled, the agnostic Chris is urged to turn to the Catholics for help ("You're telling me that I should take my daughter to a witch doctor?") and face the

possibility that her daughter is possessed by a genuine devil. With the aid of exorcist Father Lancaster Merrin (Max von Sydow) and Jesuit Priest/Psychologist Damien Karras (Jason Miller), Chris hopes to cast out the demon and bring her daughter back.

While the film retains most of the emotional and psychological impact it always had, the restored footage itself is a mixed bag. The setup and transition into the true nature of Regan's illness is more gradual, and the exorcism and story's resolution less ambiguous-but was all of it really necessary? Two brief, opening shots have been inserted before the original opening Iraqi sequence, introducing the two houses (the Jesuits' and the Mac-Neil's) that will come under attack by the demon Pazuzu. A new, extended sequence in which Chris takes Regan to a clinic for a physical examination shows the very early stages of Regan's illness, but presents too much too soon. Much of the shock of Regan's later, more violent and aggressive behavior is diminished by this scene. Instead of merely supporting the possibility that Regan's problem is purely psychological, the scene dilutes the eerie subtlety of her symptoms leading up to the direct takeover by the invading entity

Extra "subliminal" shots are added when Chris arrives home to find Regan left unattended, one of which (the pastywhite "Captain Howdy" face briefly appearing on a kitchen appliance!) is nearly laughable. The infamous "spider walk" scene has been well cut into the film, though the take used is contradictory to the other symptoms of Regan's malady, and not as chillingly effective as the one included as a supplement to 1998's 25th anniversary laserdisc. Several scenes have been added to the exorcism at the Mac-Neil house, as well as an extended epilogue, but every one of these additions is pure gold, marvelously supporting the themes of Blatty's testament to the mysteries of faith.

Featuring beautifully remastered sound and picture, the DVD's supplements include two theatrical trailers, TV and radio spots, and a running commentary by Friedkin. The last is the only real letdown on the disc, as all but approximately 10



minutes of Friedkin's commentary consists of nothing but play-by-play narration of the film's events, offering almost no additional insight into the significance of the new footage. One can't help but notice Blatty's conspicuous absence here, and wonder how much more worthwhile the commentary might have been with him as a foil for Friedkin's observations. However, this setback aside, this splendid disc is a worthwhile addition to the libraries of new fans and diehard EXOR-CIST fans alike.

-Tony Strauss

TORN CURTAIN Universal Home Video \$29.98

Several of Alfred Hitchcock's post-PSY-CHO (1960) productions, notably THE BIRDS (1963), MARNIE (1964), and even TOPAZ (1969), have seen their critical reputations rise in subsequent decades. The same cannot be said for the director's 50th effort, TORN CURTAIN (1966). It was, and remains, a Cold War clunker to many viewers. It shouldn't be dismissed as a complete failure, however, because it contains a least a couple of superb Hitchcockian set pieces.

Professor Michael Armstrong (Paul Newman) is an American nuclear scientist who publicly defects to the Communist



side for the continuation of his antimissile research. His fiancee/assistant, Sarah Sherman (Julie Andrews), hesitatingly follows him, unaware that the physicist is operating as a double agent. After obtaining the missing variable to a mathematical formula, the couple follows a perilous escape route to emerge from behind the Iron Curtain.

The leading characters aren't compellingly scripted, and method actor Newman can't ignite any onscreen chemistry with the goody-goody British thrush. Hitchcock was reportedly unhappy with her studio-influenced casting, although he had struck gold with Doris Day's starring performance in THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH (1956). This time, there's no showstopping "Que Sera, Sera"

to justify a singer's presence in the cast. Andrews' gauze-lensed closeups only contribute a sense of artificiality to her appearance.

TORN CURTAIN is primarily recalled for its suspense sequences. The repulsive, step by step murder of Armstrong's German "security guide," Gromek (Wolfgang Kieling, whose portrayal is simultaneously abrasive and oddly sympathetic), practically defines the film for most viewers. Others recollect the concluding 40 minutes, in which the couple's escape by bicycle, bus, and ship offers several nail-biting episodes. Unfortunately, the cumulative effect of these scenes is diluted by a couple of cameo performances. Countess Kuchinska (Lila Kedrova) is an unhappy woman who symbolizes the plight of natives disenfranchised by the Communist regime, but her numerous claustrophobic closeups only halt the tension. A prima Čzech ballerina (Tamara Toumanova), who delights in ferreting out defectors, spots Armstrong and

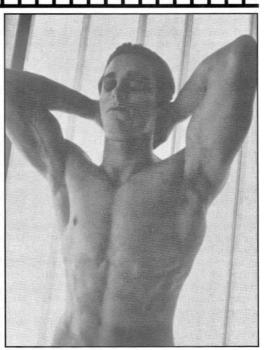
his fiancee while performing a ballet. Although her birdlike eyes create an arresting image, it's doubtful that she could actually discern them in the audience.

Universal's DVD presentation is superior to previous TV and video editions, boasting much stronger color and a 1:85-1 aspect ratio. The transfer is virtually blemish-free and contains no apparent artifacts. The supplemental 33-minute documentary TORN CURTAIN RISING is slightly defensive about its subject. Narrator Trev Broudy describes the film's three-part structure and serves up such tidbits as Hitchcock's discomfort with the possible implications of the German Gromek's asphyxiation in the farmhouse oven. No principals (and not even Pat Hitchcock!) appear in any on-camera interviews. There's a wonderful 14-minute montage of scenes accompanied by original composer Bernard Herrmann's rejected score, allowing the viewer to directly compare the merits of Herrmann's somber reading of the material with John Addison's jazzier interpretations. For some, this feature will be the highlight of Universal's entire Hitchcock series. The DVD also includes photographs, poster reproductions, a faded trailer, and brief production notes.

—John F. Black

AMERICAN PSYCHO Universal Home Video \$ 26.98

AMERICAN PSYCHO (2000) stirred up considerable interest, both positive and negative, during its long, torturous road to the screen. The bestselling 1991 novel by Bret Easton Ellis was slammed for glamorizing violence, for its misogyny, and simply for being dull. Interest peaked when Leonardo DiCaprio expressed brief interest in a film version. DiCaprio's interest waned, however, and the original director (Mary Harron) and star (Chris-



tian Bale) returned to the project, having used the down time wisely to strengthen their concept of the project. Now that all the controversy has died down, we can examine the film on its own terms.

AMERICAN PSYCHO is a very dark comedy indeed. Patrick Bateman (a sly reference to Norman Bates) is played superbly by Bale. Bateman is a successful stock broker in the Reagan era eighties, one of those "captains of capitalism" who think that they can do anything and get away with it. Bateman takes the concept one step further: he thinks he truly holds the power of life and death over people, and has the right to kill with impunity. Hookers, winos, and other innocents fall victim to his charm and savagery. Only his self-centered girlfriend (Reese Witherspoon) avoids falling prey to his lethal charms. Ironically, it is only when he kills one of his own, a fellow broker, that Bateman is marked for a murderer by a detective (a nice turn by Willem Dafoe). To tell more would be-well, criminal, but it's worth noting that many of the film's events may exist only in Bateman's sick, twisted mind.

The DVD transfer is beautiful, and the film is available in its uncut version, featuring a scene with Bateman having sex with two prostitutes—possibly another subjective view of reality on the killer's part. Extras include an interview with Bale in which he speaks in his own Brit accent, a "making of" featurette, a trailer, and cast and filmmaker bios.

-Kevin G. Shinnick

CLEOPATRA 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment \$26.98

When it was released on June 12, 1963, the 20th Century Fox, Todd-AO CLEO-PATRA was so surrounded by controversy that critics didn't seem able (or fit) to judge the film on its merits. Reviews

discussed how much it cost (\$44 million), who was sleeping with whom (anyone care to guess?), and scarcely considered the film. For nearly 40 years, CLEOPAT-RA has symbolized all that is supposedly wrong with Hollywood: huge budget overruns, high-priced stars, ineffectual management, unfinished scripts, and basic disagreement over concept—in this case, between cowriter/director Joseph L. Mankiewicz and Darryl F. Zanuck, studio head at the time of the film's release.

Is this film worth seeing?

It's long and fragmented. The first half, based without credit on Shaw's CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA, is better than the second, which covers the story of Shakespeare's ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, but then the Shaw has always played better than the Shakespeare. Strangely, there is more on-screen chemistry between Elizabeth Taylor (Cleo) and Rex Harrison (Julius Caesar) than between Taylor and Richard Burton (Marc Antony). There are great performances from Hume Cronyn, Martin Landau, and especially Roddy McDowall as Octavian. And there are even flashes of the Mankiewicz wit. For instance, Cleopatra, after a 10-minute entrance into Rome-past thousands of



cheering extras (who according to the "making-of" documentary were shouting "Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"), preceded by dancers, archers, trumpeters on horseback, and what must have been every starlet and muscleman in Italy-descends from her slave-powered Sphinx, approaches Caesar's throne, bows-and then winks, instantly making all the hoopla human. It ain't ALL ABOUT EVE (1950), but it will do. Add breathtaking sets and costumes, and an Alex North score unexpectedly different from the usual "sword and sandal" music, and the result is something well worth the time, even if only once.

The bonus features are what make this three-disc package worth purchasing. The two-hour documentary (unfortunately minus chapter stops, subtitles, or closed-captioning) presents all the behind-the-

scene details: false starts, illnesses, intrigues, and betrayals. With the exception of a reference to CLEOPATRA producer Walter Wanger's INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (1956) as "a B movie," the documentary is well-researched and entertaining. The feature-length audio commentary by Landau, publicist Jack Brodsky (coauthor of 1963's The Cleopatra Papers), and Mankiewicz's sons Chris and Tom, gives insight into the chaos of this production, and is frequently funny. There are also trailers, newsreel footage of premiers, and stills of costume sketches, concept art, the souvenir program, and the British press book. The THX-approved transfers of picture (2.35:1 Anamorphic) and sound (5.1 and Dolby Surround) are flawless.

According to the documentary and commentaries, Mankiewicz, from the start of his involvement, intended CLEO-PATRA to be two three-hour films, the second to be released six months after the first. In hopes of stemming the floods of red ink by cashing in quickly on the romance (read scandal) between Taylor and Burton, the two films were reedited into one four-hour film by Zanuck, which explains much of the film's lack of coherence. The most intriguing information to emerge is that the original footage supposedly exists, and someone is working to recreate the films Mankiewicz originally intended. Now, all we can do is wait to see if they were indeed Mankiewicz's "lost" masterpieces.

—Duane Butler

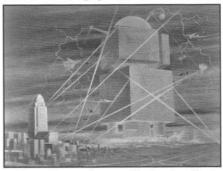
KRONOS Image Entertainment \$24.99

When I was a kid, I thought KRONOS (1957) was an awesome film! And you know what? It holds up pretty well!

know what? It holds up pretty well! KRONOS stars Jeff Morrow, Barbara Lawrence, John Emery, Morris Ankrum, George O'Hanlon, and Robert Shayne. It was produced and directed by Kurt Neumann. In movie theaters, it was presented in widescreen, a feature preserved on the DVD. The plot is pretty simple: scientists at a secret atomic research lab are taken over and controlled by a being or device from an orbiting UFO. Earth military hits it with a few missiles and it crashes into the Gulf of Mexico. The next day, a giant metallic monolith emerges and tramples over everything in its path looking for electrical energy to drain and beam into space. The military figures if they drop an atomic bomb on the thing, that should do it, but the scientists realize that such an action just might make Kronos even stronger. Too late! Kronos absorbs a direct hit and emerges unscathed. Finally, our heroes figure a way to turn Kronos' power against itself and . . . well, you know.

The film transfer is pretty clean, with only a few speckled segments, mostly around the reel changes. There are a few unintentionally funny moments, mainly due to shots being added or effects put in after the fact. In one scene, the scientists

are in the lab looking at a view screen, not knowing whether they see a meteor or a space ship. Why the mystery? The closeup of the screen (added later) clearly shows a flashing spacecraft!



The only supplemental extra is a theatrical trailer. (They could have at least had some kind of commentary or a section showing the film's posters and promotional material.)

—Ted A. Bohus

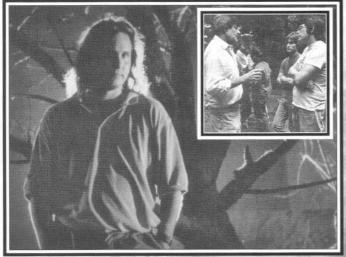
ROBOT MONSTER Image Entertainment \$24.95

Say the name Ed Wood, or the title PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE at a party, and even the ignorant will give some sort of knowing wince . . . but Phil Tucker and ROBOT MONSTER? No one seems to know enough to run the other way. But be free from fear no more, Image has brought ROBOT MONSTER to us "in Intriguing 2-D!" (as the deadpan cover art proudly proclaims). If it was presented in the original 3-D, or gave us the options of both, this disc would really be something—but then again, a deluxe presentation of ROBOT MONSTER seems a contradiction in terms.

Would-be spaceboy Johnny (Gregory Moffett) opens the film by trying to blast his little sister (Pamela Paulson) to atoms with his toy raygun. He then wanders around Bronson Canyon until he stumbles on a German professor (John Mylong) and his strapping young assistant, Roy (George Nader), at work in a cave. Later, he and mom (Selena Royle) and older sister Alice (Claudia Barrett) fall asleep on their picnic blanket. While Johnny sleeps, the world ends! When he wakes up, he finds the German married to his mom, his sister feuding and wooing with Roy, and a guy in a gorilla suit and a diving helmet out to destroy them all! Armed with a deadly bubble machine and an echochamber voice, the fiendish Ro-Man threatens the post-nuclear family with a telecommunication device that shows everything from nuclear blasts to footage from ONE MILLION B.C. (1940). All seems lost, until the alien falls in love with "Al-lice" and learns a valuable lesson about being "hu-man."

Like some LSD version of THE SOUND OF MUSIC (1965), the sight of this overweight gorilla in his diving helmet,

Continued on page 26



Believe in Believe

Robert Tinnell

interviewed by Mark Clark

It's never easy being 14 years old, but it's especially tough for Ben Stiles. First, he can't seem to communicate with his absentee parents, diplomats who apparently live overseas. Then he gets kicked out of boarding school after pulling an imaginative but childish ghost prank on his classmates. He's forced to move in with an icy-tempered grandfather he barely knows. And finally he discovers that his grandfather's estate is haunted by the eerie specter of a young woman in a red coat. Of course, after the ghost prank, no one takes his claims seriously.

Ben (Ricky Mabe) is the point-of-view character of BE-LIEVE (2000), a horror film aimed at younger audiences and lensed by director Robert Tinnell, whose previous work includes horror-fan favorite FRANKENSTEIN AND ME (1996). Unlike FRANKENSTEIN AND ME, though, which was essentially a coming-of-age story with horror trappings, BELIEVE is designed to generate real chills—and it delivers. Even veteran horror fans should receive at least a few satisfying shivers from the picture.

As BELIEVE's story progresses, Ben quickly realizes that his grandfather (Jan Rubes) isn't telling everything he knows about the mysterious Figure in Red. Granddad goes ape when he discovers that Ben has enlisted the help of a neighbor girl (Elisha Cuthbert), who has also seen the ghost, in his quest for the truth. The girl's uncle (Ben Gazzara) is equally upset by this development, and forbids her to see Ben. The teenagers realize that their families' histories will somehow unlock the secrets of the Stiles house, and maybe help their phantom find peace.

house, and maybe help their phantom find peace.

Tinnell refers to BELIEVE as "an entry level horror film." Pressed for an explanation of this term, he explains: "There's a void for young people—and older people, too—who would like a quality supernatural experience that isn't misogynist or extremely gory. I was trying to make something like I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE, that kids and adults can look at and be scared without being steamfolled."

Imagine George Romero shooting a movie for THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY and you'll have some idea of the film's tone. To achieve this effect, Tinnell asked production designer Jules Ricard to decorate his sets in the style of the classic Hammer Horrors. Then Tinnell shot his movie much in the mode of direc-

ABOVE: Robert Tinnell on the set of BELIEVE. INSET: George Lucas and Stephen King discuss an upcoming scene for CREEPSHOW (1982), while newcomer to film Tinnell (behind King) listens in. LEFT: It's alive! Jamieson Boulanger and Ryan Gosling create a monster in the delightful FRANKENSTEIN AND ME (1996).

tor Mario Bava, the man behind such classics as BLACK SUNDAY (1961). Viewers who know Tinnell only through FRANKENSTEIN AND ME will find BELIEVE a revelation. It's far more visually cohesive than his early work and its use of color is striking. Certainly Tinnell was well served by cinematographer Pierre Jodoin, whose work is imaginative and eloquent. Composer Jerry DeVilliers Jr. sets the mood with a truly haunting score.

Tinnell, a formidable horror-film scholar in addition to being a gifted young filmmaker, built in several nods toward great ghost pictures of the past. Scarlet Streeters will appreciate the film's visual references to such movies as THE UNINVITED (1944) and THE INNOCENTS (1961). BELIEVE also quotes from Hammer's THE HORROR OF DRACULA (1958) and—of all things—the Bela Lugosi Monogram meller THE INVISIBLE GHOST (1941). The director confesses to influences as wide-ranging as Romero's MARTIN (1977) and THE GHOST AND MR. CHICKEN (1965), but his capsule description of BELIEVE is "The Hardy Boys meet Wuthering Heights."

Like FRANKENSTEIN AND ME and his directorial fea-

Like FRANKENSTEIN AND ME and his directorial feature debut, KIDS OF THE ROUND TABLE (1995), BE-LIEVE also boasts memorable performances by young, unknown actors. Cuthbert's portrayal of an orphan who hopes the ghost will help her contact her dead parents, is particularly moving. Why do Tinnell's films routinely feature good performances by young actors, when such performances are so difficult to find elsewhere?

"The casting process is critical," Tinnell said. "You can't settle. You have to have trust in the kids you pick and you have to work them very hard. You have to push them, to tell them 'that's not working.'"

Continued on page 77



SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN Continued from page 24

traipsing lightly along the rolling hills of Bronson Canyon, is a hauntingly lyrical sight few who have witnessed it sober are ever likely to forget. Here, captured on a decent transfer from an only mildly crummy print, the grandeur is much



more palpable than it ever was on video, and the whole affair transcends its humble auspices to attain the surreal sweep of a Leni Riefenstahl mountaineering epic. Yes, regardless of the lame acting, the repetitive script, and the Godardesquely abrupt snippets of Elmer "What Was He Thinking?" Bernstein's score—or maybe because of these things-there is something truly magical about this unendurable masterwork. On DVD, there's just that much more to love, that much more lack of detail in which to lose oneself. Thanks to the clarity of the digital transfer, for example, I was able to discern that the rocketship in one of the big special effects scenes was not on a wire, as one might presume, but actually held by a hand covered with a sky-colored cloth. Sometimes it's things like that which make being "hu-man" worthwhile. -Erich Kuersten

FUNNY FACE Paramount Home Video \$29.99

When thinking of the best of Audrey Hepburn's many memorable performances, three that immediately come to mind are SABRINA (1954), FUNNY FACE (1957), and MY FAIR LADY (1964). In each of these films, Hepburn portrays a not-too-ugly duckling who, with the help of the heart and/or the attentions of an older male mentor, is transformed into a stunningly beautiful swan. With SAB-RINA, it's the force of love that changes a plain chauffeur's daughter into an object of affection for two brothers (Humphrey Bogart and William Holden); MY FAIR LADY has her Cockney guttersnipe painstakingly prepared for entry into the

Edwardian upper classes, where she is accepted for her patrician bearing, charm, and beauty. Based on the Greek legend of Pygmalion, a sculptor who brought his statue to life and fell in love with it, MY FAIR LADY substitutes a professor of languages (Rex Harrison) for the sculptor, and creates an "almost" love story. FUNNY FACE, however, is a love story. Set against the glamour and fashion industry of the fifties, the film finds Audrey as a Plain Jane who, under the watchful eye of a fashion photographer (Fred Astaire), blossoms as the camera clicks away.

Hepburn headlines with the decadesolder Astaire in a frothy musical film that the folks over at Metro Goldwyn Mayer would have been proud to have produced. FUNNY FACE, though from Paramount, bears all the markings of an MGM product, which isn't so surprising when one reads the credits. Director Stanley Donen was responsible in part for such MGM classics as ON THE TOWN (1949), ROYAL WEDDING (1951), and SINGIN IN THE RAIN (1952). Costar Kay Thompson was known behind the scenes at Metro for her delectable vocal arrangements, substantially for Judy Garland. Roger Edens, FUNNY FACE's producer, was an invaluable asset to the MGM music department, and is probably best known for the special arrangement of "You Made Me Love You" for Garland, who sang it to a photograph of Clark Gable as "Dear Mr. Gable" in BROADWAY MELODY OF 1938 (1938) Astaire himself, following his RKO contract, appeared on screen for MGM, with a variety of partners (including Ginger Rogers), in the musical classics ZIEGFELD FOLLIES (1946), EASTER PA-RADE (1948), and THE BAND WAGON (1953), as well as the cult musical YO-LANDA AND THE THIEF (1945). And if you look quickly enough, there's even Ruta Lee, fresh from SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS (1954), another Metro



classic. With a cast and crew honed in the MGM musical traditions, and a score of notable George and Ira Gershwin songs, FUNNY FACE easily lives up to the phase often used to describe its glories as "The MGM musical that Metro never made."

Although problematic, Paramount has for the most part delivered a vibrant Technicolor DVD transfer. Colors leap

from the screen with the keen sense of a fashion photographer's eye. There are more shades of pink in the opening number ("Think Pink") than in a box of 64 Crayola crayons; each delivered faithfully. Skies are a glossy blue, and the reds are incredibly stable for a film of this age. The problem arises within the print itself: there are small blue dots appearing at the same point on the screen, which is either a sign of a flaw in the original negative or a signal to get a FUNNY FACE restoration under way. The sound has been given two wonderful restorations. The Dolby Digital 5.1 mix enables the musical numbers to fill the listening space, adding some directional dialogue and making more than adequate use of the low bass sounds. Purists will opt for the restored original mono track, which is decidedly front and center.

As it stands, Paramount's DVD of FUN-NY FACE is a remarkable achievement and a worthy addition to any film lover's home library.

—Anthony Dale

THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES Anchor Bay Entertainment \$29.99

Most of the series produced by Britain's great House of Hammer ended with an embarrassing whimper rather than a climactic bang. For over two decades, American audiences thought that the Dracula franchise ended with the most shameful entry imaginable. Happily, Anchor Bay's DVD release shows that this simply was not the case.

Desperately trying to inject some new life into the series, Hammer decided to jump on the martial arts bandwagon and teamed up with Sir Run Run Shaw to produce THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES (1973). The film foregoes the modern-era time frame of the previous two films and sets the adventure in the Chinese village of Ping Kuei in 1904. Dracula (John Forbes-Robinson, picking up Christopher Lee's discarded cape) has taken over the body of a warlord (Chan Sen) and now rules over the titular golden vampires. Fortunately, Professor Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) is lecturing in nearby Chungking, where the grandchildren of a villager who actually killed one of the vampires comes to seek his aid in destroying the horde. Yes, the film is definitely not one of Hammer's brightest moments, but it's very far from their worst.

Anchor Bay has done a fine job in bringing the Roan Group's laserdisc edition to DVD. THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES is presented on one side of the DVD in a gorgeous 2:35 print, with its original mono soundtrack never sounding better. The image is incredibly crisp (so crisp, it shows the poor matte job of Dracula's castle in the distance) and perfectly balanced. While lacking a commentary track or a true trailer for the Hammer version, this side also includes a gem of a supplement: the long out-of-

print soundtrack. The 45 minute, 40 second soundtrack features John Forbes-Robinson and Peter Cushing narrating the entire story with James Bernard's



great score and sound effects enhancing the tale. It's almost like a lost Hammer radio show!

The second side of the DVD features a truly interesting supplement: the hideous Max Rosenberg edit that was released in the USA as THE SEVEN BROTHERS MEET DRACULA (1979). Fourteen minutes shorter than the original, SEVEN BROTHERS is actually missing much more footage, due to the fact that so many shots are used and reused over and over again, mostly in slow motion! This was the film Americans saw as Hammer's final Dracula entry and rightly bashed. To add insult to injury, the image is cropped so closely that Dracula's castle is cut in half for the first long shot and most characters have the tops of their heads out of frame. The film is the best it's ever looked, but is still much grainier and has more print damage than the splendid LEGEND. A trailer for SEVEN BROTHERS is also featured on this side of the disc. Hysterically titled THE SEVEN BROTHERS AND THEIR ONE SISTER MEET DRACULA, the trailer gives away every major plot point of the film!

Anchor Bay has delivered a great disc, one that's a must for all Hammer fans.

—Ieff Allen

FROGS MGM Home Entertainment \$19.98

In the early seventies, Smokey the Bear cautioned, "Only you can prevent forest fires," and Woodsy Owl reminded us to "Give a hoot, don't pollute." The woodland creatures in FROGS (1972) deliver a similar message—but do so in much harsher terms.

This movie pulls few punches and hits much harder than such other eco-thrillers of the era as SILENT RUNNING (1971) and SOYLENT GREEN (1973), not to mention GODZILLA VS THE SMOG MONSTER, with which FROGS shared an AIP double-bill. FROGS plays like a body-count giallo horror, with hacked-off wildlife taking the place of the mysterious assassin. People die—lots of 'em—and they die in bizarre, gruesome, yet strangely satisfying ways.

Pickett Smith (Sam Elliott), a photo-

Pickett Smith (Sam Elliott), a photojournalist for an ecological magazine, is shooting pictures of chemical spills in what appears to be the Louisiana bayou country. Drunken, stupid Clint Crockett (Adam Roarke) overturns Smith's canoe with his speedboat. But Clint's sister, Karen (Joan Van Ark), takes a shine to Smith and invites him back to the family's island estate for a Fourth of July celebration, which doubles as a birthday party for the family's hatchet-faced patriarch, Jason Crockett (Ray Milland).

Heartless Jason has deployed copious quantities of pesticides to try to kill the island's native fauna, which includes spiders, snakes, lizards, and, of course, frogs. The offended beasties, we soon learn, aren't about to take this lying down-or hopping or crawling or slithering or any other way. The animals rise up and strike back at the human interlopers. Crockett family and friends, gathered for the party, meet with various brutal demises orchestrated by the outraged critters. The two most memorable of these befall Joan's effete Cousin Michael (Nicholas Cortland), who is poisoned by tiny lizards who trap him in a greenhouse and break a series of containers filled with pesticides and other toxins, and dippy, butterfly-collecting



Aunt Iris (Holly Irving), who makes like an hors d'ouerve platter for a legion of hungry snakes.

Persnickety viewers may wonder what such animals as tarantulas, rattlesnakes, and gila monsters are doing in the bayou, so far removed from their natural desert habitat, but that's beside the point. There's nothing remotely plausible about this film, so why sweat the small stuff? Surprisingly, the movie doesn't play its loopy premise with tongue-in-cheek; it goes for straight chills. Even more surprisingly, this approach works! Most of the murders are genuinely disquieting, and the setting—a virtual photocopy of Alfred Hitchcock's THE BIRDS (1963)—remains eerie and tense.

Milland provides a delightfully arch portrayal as the movie's crotchety, bitter old geezer and chief irritant. Perhaps the actor was feeling a bit curmudgeonly himself. By this point, Milland had gone from starring in top-drawer dramas (including his Oscar-winning turn in 1945's THE LOST WEEKEND) to appearing in low-budget B-movies like, well, FROGS. Nevertheless, Milland soldiered on until 1984, appearing in 37 more TV and film productions.

The picture is populated with cookiecutter characters, but Elliott, seen here before he grew the giant mustache that later became his trademark, makes an endearing hero. Van Ark has little to do but looks good doing it. Director George McCowan keeps the pace brisk and tells the tale in a straightforward, workmanlike style. McCowan worked primarily in television. His numerous TV credits include episodes of BARNABY JONES, STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO, and HART TO HART. FROGS plays like a TV movie.

MGM/UA has released FROGS in a crystal clear, anamorphic widescreen transfer of a vivid color print. The sound quality is very good, as well. The disc also includes the original theatrical trailer. It's a near-flawless presentation of a surprisingly enjoyable movie.

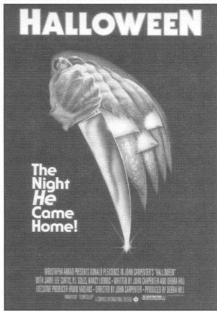
-Mark Clark

HALLOWEEN Anchor Bay Entertainment

Citizens of Haddonfield beware! He's back! Halloween, 1963. All the neighborhood children are trick or treating, but Michael Myer's older sister is tricking with her boyfriend on her father's livingroom sofa. Michael becomes upset and takes matters into his own murderous hands. Fifteen years later, he escapes form the state hospital and makes his way back to his old hometown to find fresh victims. Pursued by Dr. Sam Loomis (Donald Pleasance) and Sheriff Brackett (Charles Cyphers), Michael goes on a murder spree the likes of which this small town has never seen!

HALLOWEEN is truly a terrifying film, the most famous of director John Carpenter. The camera angles and dark, moody shots do more to frighten than do actual scenes of blood and gore (very minimal in this movie). Carpenter's music score adds even more to the movie's fright quota.

Anchor Bay's DVD release of HAL-LOWEEN is available in two formats on one disc, a widescreen version at 2.35:1



and a full-frame presentation. The THX digital restoration is absolutely marvelous, with breathtaking color. Additional features include original theatrical trailers, television and radio spots, a still and poster gallery, behind-the scenes photos, talent bios, and the documentary HALLOWEEN UNMASKED 2000, produced and directed by Mark Cerulli.

HALLOWÉEN launched Jamie Lee Curtis' movie career and spawned six sequels (to date), none of which approaches the terror of the first. Curtis is quite good, though we keep asking ourselves why Jamie Lee always drops the knife. With a raving lunatic right in front of her, she keeps stabbing him and then letting go of the knife! They'd have had to pry it from my fingers!

—Dan Clayton

THE PRISONER VOLUME 1—8 A&E Home Video \$39.95 Each Set

Fans of THE X-FILES will find that paranoid series' spiritual stepfather in THE PRISONER, Patrick McGoohan's 1967



fantasy series about a secret agent who, on resigning his job, is kidnapped and taken to a seaside resort town called The Village. The happy Villagers, dressed in colorful garb, are known only by numbers. (The ex-spy is Number Six.) Over the course of a 17-episode run, the hero, played by McGoohan, faces relentless attempts to find out why he resigned his job: Was he selling out? Was it a matter of principle? The efforts include various mind games and technological trickery, all usually spearheaded by the Village leader, Number Two (played by a different actor in most episodes, showing that puppet leaders may change but the totalitarian song remains the same).

McGoohan, who devised the series format with George Markstein, was clearly worried about the encroachment of technology on society. The Village, on the surface a collection of quaint 19th-century Italianate buildings, is a kind of Disneyland of terror. Beneath the old-world charm, Number Six discovers a wealth of technological marvels, including spy cameras and mind-altering lasers, making THE PRISONER a Kafkaesque parable about the dehumanization of man.

The series is also big on other timeless themes, from identity and trust to elections and education. In "The Schizoid Man," for instance, Number Two recruits a double of Number Six to make him doubt his sanity. "Free for All" is a marvelous satire of the entire election process. "A Change of Mind" satirizes self-help groups and the idea of community outreach, showing that both can be used as the tools of oppressors. In that episode, Number Six is declared "unmutual," a menace to society ("Public Enemy Number Six," as he puts it) because of his individualistic ways. In the end, he turns the tables on his captors by using both the suspicion inherent in the Village and the cattlelike attitude of its happy, easily-led inhabitants.

The series was controversial, as well. Episode 14, "Living In Harmony," was actually banned by CBS during the series' original run, paradoxically because it was too violent and pacifist. The story finds the Prisoner in the American West, playing a cowboy who refuses to wear a gun.

In "The General," Number Six opposes a brainwashing system called "Speedlearn," which endows its users with the knowledge required for a university-level degree in only 10 minutes. You might know the facts and figures, argues Number Six, but can you think original thoughts? Can you reason? Or are you just one of many, a row of "educated cabbages"? (Education reform advocates, are you listening?)

Such ideas are first showcased in "Arrival," the episode which introduces the hero as an unbending moralist who "will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed, or numbered," whose "life is my own." Through odd camera angles and quick cuts, director Don Chaffey (1963's JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS), puts the viewer in the hero's disoriented shoes, where no one—even onetime friends—can be trusted. As the Prisoner, McGoohan is quirky and intelligent, moving like a caged animal.

The DVD release of the series—previously issued in less-than-pristine video and laserdisc versions by MPI a decade ago—is cause for celebration. Cynical and thought provoking in a way unusual for much of sixties TV, THE PRISONER, at its best, is top-notch television. The transfer quality on the first eight volumes (featuring the initial 14 episodes) is terrific, even better than the limited edition Columbia House videos of two years ago.

That said, the extras included are generally poor. All the DVDs feature the same interactive map of the Village; each also include coming attractions trailers, and some odd foreign filmclips. Volume One offers the 16mm "alternative version" of "The Chimes of Big Ben," an escape attempt installment costarring Leo McKern, which was discovered about a decade ago in Canada. Of subpar quality, it has different editing and music, and an extra scene.

What could have been included? For starters, there is a superb British multipart documentary about the show by Stephen Ricks, featuring interviews with cast, crew, and other principals. There is also a Canadian television interview with

McGoohan, in which the actor talks extensively about the creation of the series.

What DVD viewers have to settle for, however, is a 25-minute interview with production manager Bernard Williams, included on Volume Five. Williams is presented in a decidedly no-frills manner: facing an anonymous questioner, he discusses everything from actors and writers to budgets and locations. But the conversation is not for the uninitiated, since it presupposes you know something about THE PRISONER's history. For instance, there are numerous references to SECRET AGENT (McGoohan's previous series) and Lew Grade (the head of ITC, the program's production company), which are sure to leave many confused. There are also flat-out omissions and falsehoods: Williams makes no mention of script editor George Markstein, who created the series with McGoohan; and it was Markstein who cowrote the first script, "Arrival," not McGoohan as Williams asserts.

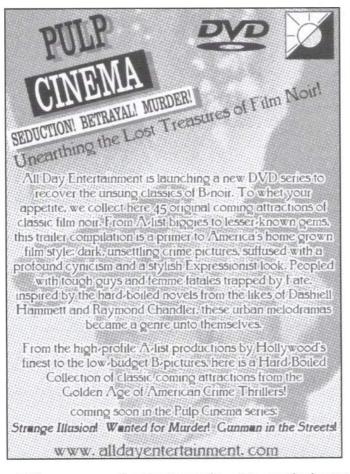
While there is fascinating stuff in Williams' talk—the development of the white balloons that menace the Villagers, for instance, shows how luck plays a role in creation—it is shallow stuff compared to what could have been offered. That's too bad, because THE PRISONER, thought provoking and entertaining at the same time, deserves better.

-Tom Soter

THE DEVIL'S RAIN VCI Home Entertainment \$24.99

THE DEVIL'S RAIN (1975) is a cheap movie. Not one of those endearing, overachieving, small-budget productions. Just cheap. Everything about this movie is cheap, not only its nickel-and-dime sets and penny-pinching costumes (William Shatner wears a straw cowboy hat that looks more like a wicker trash can), but absolutely everything. For instance, the first half of the film features lengthy footage of first William Shatner and then Tom Skerritt driving back and forth to an old ghost town where most of the story takes place. These long, pointless scenes clearly







exist for no purpose other than to pad the film's running time.

Producers James V. Cullen and Michael S. Glick appear to have constructed this film from the marketing plan down. One interesting decision was bringing in Church of Satan founder Anton Szandor LaVey to serve as a credited "consultant." (LaVey also plays a minor role.) This ploy was designed to help THE DEVIL'S RAIN stand out amid the torrent of demonic fright flicks that flooded theaters in the wake of THE EXORCIST.

The movie holds interest because of its oddball cast, cobbled together to maximize marquee value while minimizing budget. The roster blends proven stars whose careers were at a low ebb (Shatner and Ernest Borgnine) with neophytes, some of whom later distinguished themselves (such as Skerritt and John Travolta, who has a bit part) and some of whom did not (such as Joan Prather). Veterans Ida Lupino, Eddie Albert, and Keenan Wynn all receive high billing, but make only brief appearances. None of these performers acquit themselves particularly well, though. Still, it's fun to watch Shatner and Borgnine gnaw the scenery and try to out-mug one another.

Borgnine plays immortal Satanist Jonathan Corbis, who wants to recover a book stolen from him generations ago by an unfaithful follower. Corbis' erstwhile disciple sold out the cult to Pilgrim justice in 17th-century New England. The movie does not explain how Corbis gains eternal

life, or why he waits several hundred years to seek revenge. Nevertheless, revenge he seeks by hunting down the descendents of the turncoat. First, descendent Mark Preston (Shatner) squares off against Corbis and his congregation. (In macabre touch, the eyes of Corbis' minions turn into black gogglelike bulbs once they fall under his power.) After Mark loses a battle of wills with Corbis, Tom Preston (Skerritt) takes over. To win, Tom will have to decipher a lot of black magic mumbo jumbo and keep his head together better than quick-tempered Mark.

All this is, at best, perfunctory. The film simply marks time until we reach the Big Shock Finale, wherein Corbis and his band of merry devil-worshipers melt into puddles of steaming, Satanic goo. This is not scary in and of itself, though it remains rather unappetizing. Still, after 10 minutes of liquefying Lucifer-worshipers, the effect loses even its power to disgust and turns comic. The Wicked Witch of the West's disintegration at the climax of THE WIZARD OF OZ (1939) was more chillingly realized.

Director Robert Fuest began his career as a TV production designer, writer, and, finally, director during the sixties. His tenure as director of THE AVENGERS catapulted Fuest from television to the big screen. After directing the thriller AND SOON THE DARKNESS (1970), Fuest made a splashy horror debut in 1971 with THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES, one of the sharpest and quirkiest chillers of the

decade. He cowrote and directed his next two films, DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN (1972) and THE FINAL PROGRAMME (1973), but their commercial failure sent his career into a skid. THE DEVIL'S RAIN (1975) was his final picture before he returned to television. His compositions, especially those involving the ghost town exteriors, provide the only artistically interesting elements in the film.

VCI's transfer has its problems. In three or four places, images briefly break down into digital "bit maps," the hallmark of poor transfers. While distracting, these defects surface infrequently and the disc remains watchable. The sound quality is excellent. The film is presented in letter-boxed, widescreen format. The disc also includes a photo gallery and the original theatrical trailer.

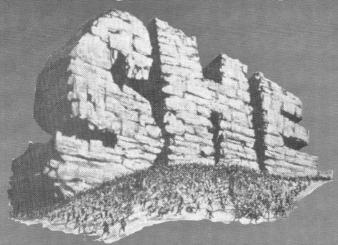
—Mark Clark

BEACH BLANKET BINGO MGM Home Entertainment \$14.95

BEACH BLANKET BINGO (1965) is celebrated by aficionados as the most entertaining entry in the AIP Beach Party series. The regular stars are buttressed by a battery of returning costars and celebrity additions. Frankie (Frankie Avalon) and Dee Dee (Annette Funicello) are still managing to make each other jealous, and this time they've encountered their perfect foils: a somewhat jaded skydiving couple.

Continued on page 78

EMPIRE OF THE IMAGINATION



WHO MUST BE OBEYED PART TWO

by Lelia Loban

In 1935, Merian C. Cooper produced the first black-and-white talkie of SHE, a 95-minute feature for Radio-Keith-Orpheum. Cooper had always harbored dreams of becoming an explorer. The producer of more than 50 movies, he brought his sense of mystery and adventure to many of them, including THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME (1932), KING KONG (1933), SON OF KONG (1933), DR. CYCLOPS (1940), and MIGHTY JOE YOUNG (1949). In 1933, Cooper replaced his mentor, David O. Selznick, as RKO's executive producer, but soon decided that he preferred to work independently. His cardiac problems, his wedding to Dorothy Jordan, and their prolonged honeymoon also distracted him from his job. When he resigned in 1934 after a stormy tenure, Cooper closed out his

honeymoon also distracted him from his job. When he resigned in 1934 after a stormy tenure, Cooper closed out his contractual obligation (before resuming his successful career producing movies for RKO, Pioneer, MGM, Argosy, and other studios) by producing SHE and THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII, both released in 1935. (RKO rereleased them together in 1949, as a double bill.)

Ruth Rose wrote SHE's screenplay, with additional dialogue by Dudley Nichols. Irving Pichel (Sandor in 1936's DRACULA'S DAUGHTER) and Lansing C. Holden directed SHE is Holden's sole credit as a director. Pichel

1936's DRACULA'S DAUGHTER) and Lansing C. Holden directed. SHE is Holden's sole credit as a director. Pichel had directed only twice before, first as subordinate to Ernest B. Schoedsack on THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME (1932), which Cooper produced. Pichel directed 33 later movies, including DESTINATION MOON (1950). Schoedsack, who was Rose's husband and Cooper's close friend, directed Cooper's THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII. Though it's never been substantiated, it is widely held that Schoedsack worked without credit on SHE. Schoedsack, with experience as producer, director, writer, editor, cinematographer, and even actor (he's the machine-gunner who finally shoots down Kong, from a plane piloted

by Cooper!), could do pretty much anything required on a

movie set.

Max Steiner, a student of Gustav Mahler, contributed the exceptional orchestral score for SHE. The former child prodigy from Austria scored Broadway musicals and more than 250 movies between 1929 and 1965. Steiner was among the earliest composers to write movie music that closely followed (or even commented on) the action. His film scores include THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME (1932), KING KONG (1933), GONE WITH THE WIND (1939), CASABLANCA (1942), MILDRED PIERCE (1945), KEY LARGO (1948), WHITE HEAT (1949), and A SUMMER PLACE (1959), this last giving the veteran composer a number-one hit song.

In a change from H. Rider Haggard's novel, Leo Vincey (Randolph Scott) grows up in America before the movie begins. In the thirties (instead of Haggard's Victorian era), Leo returns to his ancestral estate in England as a mature adult, after receiving a telegram from Horace

rian era), Leo returns to his ancestral estate in England as a mature adult, after receiving a telegram from Horace Holly (Nigel Bruce), who has worked beside Leo's uncle, John Vincey (Samuel S. Hinds) for 17 years in John's home laboratory. Scott, 37 years old and with a receding hairline, looks his age and plays the character as more decisive and less boyishly naive than the usual Leo. (Ruggedly handsome Scott, who lived for some time with fellow star Cary Grant and was rumored to be his lover, later starred in many Westerns, for which he's better known.) Scott's Leo can take care of himself. Uncle John, sick with radiation paisoning from his experimental attempts to reradiation poisoning from his experimental attempts to re-produce the flame of eternal youth, lives barely long enough to give Leo a gold statuette of She in flames (more





Helen Gahagan Douglas (wife of actor Melvyn Douglas) may have ruled a fantastic lost city as Hash-A-Mo-Tep in the elaborate 1935 production of SHE, but she was no match for the dirty politics of Richard Nixon during a 1950 Senate race. Douglas herself was guilty of some tricky doings when she tried to buy up every existing print of the film, which, in the antifeminist spirit of the times, she thought might prove a political liability. Costar Randolph Scott, who played Leo Vincey, was the subject of scandal and speculation himself due to his cozy living arrangements and close personal relationship with fellow star Cary Grant.

elegant than the potsherd of Haggard's tale!) and tell Leo the family legend and mission. In this version, the ancestral victim comes from 15th-century England instead of ancient Egypt. John Vincey emphasizes the quest for the flame of life rather than revenge against She, not named Ayesha here, but the harsher and more Pharaonic-sounding Hash-A-Mo-Tep. After John's death, Leo and Holly go looking for the Lost City of Kor.

In the nearly half a century between publication of Haggard's novel in England (1886) and RKO's release of SHE in the United States (July 12, 1935), the world's knowledge of Africa had expanded as public opinion of Victorian colonialism grew more negative. As a consequence, Ruth Rose's screenplay relocates Kor to Muscovy, borrowed from Haggard's sequel, Ayesha: The Return of She (1905). Holly explains to Leo that Muscovy is an old name for Siberia, Russia and Kamchatka. Volcanic mountains give Hash-A-Mo-Tep's hidden valley its tropical climate, though it's surrounded by ice and snow. A sound stage stands in for snowbound Muscovy, with excellent matte paintings by Mario Larrinaga.

Rose adds two original characters, Dugmore (Lumsden Hare) and Tanya (Helen Mack), living in a squalid yurt in Muscovy. Tanya replaces the character of Ustane in Haggard's plot. Surly Dugmore uses Tanya as his servant. He says she's his daughter, but she grew up in a convent, igno-

rant of her parentage, until he showed up and claimed her. (Cooper had wanted to cast Joel McCrea and his wife, Frances Dee, for Leo and Tanya. When they proved unavailable, he settled for Randolph Scott and diminutive former child actress Helen Mack.)

Greedily eyeing Leo's valuable gold statuette, Dugmore imagines that the quest will lead to piles of treasure. He offers a protection racket: he will guide the travellers in return for a partnership, but if Holly and Leo refuse, he'll turn the locals against them. The travellers reluctantly accept Dugmore's bargain. He brings Tanya along to cook and clean up. She adapts well to hardships—which include wearing a dress on a dogsled! Naturally, she falls for Leo, who treats her decently.

In the mountains, the party discovers the frozen remains of the 15th-century Vincey ancestor, whose wife survived to pass along the legend to future generations, after he and a saber-toothed tiger killed each other. The recent presence of this Pleistocene tiger reveals Kor as a "lost world" in more ways than one. (Trust KING KONG veterans Cooper and Schoedsack to liven up the landscape with at least one impressive—if dead—prehistoric creature!) When Dugmore tries to hack gold trinkets from the corpse, the noise of his ice axe brings down an avalanche, one of Vernon L. Walker's many good special effects and extremely well-staged. The avalanche sends Dugmore down a



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In the ensuing melee, Leo pulls out his concealed pistol, starts shooting, and knocks over a brazier, setting the Hall of Kings on fire as he and Holly rescue Tanya. Escaping through the caverns, the explorers leap across an abyss, onto the teetering rock described by Haggard in the novel. They scramble to safety, only to reach a dead end, at Hash-A-Mo-Tep's grotto of the sacred flame. She, arriving through the shortcut from her own quarters, confronts Leo and threatens to kill Tanya if he refuses the offer of eter-

nal youth.

When Leo reluctantly gives in, Hash-A-Mo-Tep taunts Tanya, "Your hair will whiten. Your eyes will lose their brightness. Your cheeks will wrinkle. Your limbs will wither, while I defy the years and laugh at time!" Raising her arms, She cries, "I call upon the

flame most powerful, most swift, preserver of life and youth and beauty." The flame springs up like a tornado of lights and fireworks. When it dies down, She starts to speak the words again-"Your eyes will lose their brightness"-but it's She who starts to wither . .

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LEFT: The stunning sets for the lost city of Kor betray an Art Deco inspiration for the spectacular, all-dancing sacrifice scene in the 1935 RKO production of SHE. That's Tanya (Helen Mack) center stage in the veil, awaiting death. RIGHT: Hash-A-Mo-Tep dishes out a few orders to one of her priests (Bill Wolfe) while Leo Vincey and Horace Holly (Nigel Bruce) observe. Bruce held in check his patented bumbling routine—perfected four years later when he first played Dr. Watson in THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES and ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (both 1939)—to give a fairly straightforward interpretation of Holly.

rected at least 60 Hindi movies between 1931 and 2000.) Comedy Pictures changes the location to a lively bazaar, the better to use Haggard's plot as a framework for the movie's real reason to exist: the song and dance numbers. Roopa Varman stars as Ayesha, with Kamraan Sheikh as Leo Vincey and Krishna Kumari (most sources give her name as Rumari) as Ustane. The supporting cast (featuring the Amahagger tribe singing and dancing in swirly satin capes!) includes Arvind Kumar, Amrit Rana, Helen Richardson, Ranjana Shukla, Kamal Mohan, Nazir Kashmiri, Rani, Raphik, Shafi, and Nanda. Composers Muhammad Igbal (who scored more than 60 Hindi movies between 1931 and 1999) and Krishna Dayal wrote the music, with words by Farooq Qaiser (author of lyrics for 54 Hindi musicals between 1950 and 1988). Solo singers on the soundtrack include Muhammad Iqbal, Meena Kapoor, Sulochana Kadam, and Madhubala Javeri.

Film critics in India remember MALIKA SALOMI today not so much for the minimalist plot and character development, but because the cast includes a renowned dancer and cabaret singer, Helen Richardson. (She's probably featured here in one of the many variety acts, not as a speaking character.) Usually credited only as Helen, she made MALIKA SALOMI shortly before her phenomenal rise to stardom in the sixties. Though nearly unknown in the United States, Helen is one of the best-loved performers in "Bollywood," the thriving and extremely prolific Bombay film industry. Her ethnic background is Burmese and Spanish. She emigrated to Bombay from Burma in the early fifties. A recent winner of the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement award, Helen has made at least 338 movies from 1936 to the present, despite a career hiatus for a number of years, due to her marriage to screenwriter Salim Khan. She plays character parts today, but she appears in MALIKA SALOMI near her youthful peak as a singer and dancer.

On April 18, 1965, Hammer-Seven Arts and Associated British-Pathé released a new SHE, starring Ursula Andress as Ayesha, Peter Cushing as Major Horace Holly, John Richardson as Leo Vincey, Bernard Cribbens as Job, Rosenda Monteros as Ustane, Christopher Lee as Billali (High

LEFT: In the 1965 Hammer Films production of SHE, Ayesha (former Bond girl and *Playboy* centerfold Ursula Andress) challenges Leo Vincey (John Richardson) to save the life of a slave girl by stabbing her, but the spineless hero cannot bring himself to do so. (Leo is The Last Actionless Hero, it seems.) High Priest Ballali (Hammer veteran Christopher Lee) is not in the least bit surprised. RIGHT: Ayesha's Empire of the Imagination (here called Kuma rather than Kor) was less elaborate than in the RKO production, but still pretty impressive and perfectly functional when it came time to roast a few disloyal subjects.





Priest of Ayesha in this version), and André Morell as Ustane's father, Haumeid. Hammer loops the dialogue for this international cast, with a distracting lack of synchronization between words and lips in some scenes. Robert Day directs

the screenplay by David T. Chantler.

This movie, like the 1935 RKO version before it, benefits from excellent cinematography (Harry Waxman) and art direction (Robert Jones), with a first-rate musical score by Hammer veteran James Bernard. It was one of the late composer's personal favorites, since it afforded him the opportunity to expand beyond the horror genre into some-

thing more adventuresome.

Universal originally planned to make SHE. Studio head Tony Hinds asked John Temple-Smith to write and produce, "but Temple-Smith's script (which was dark, violent, and true to the Rider Haggard novel) had left Universal cold." Hammer then got the nod. With executive producer Michael Carreras and his associate producer, Aida Young, in charge, "adventure would be to the fore." (Denis Miekle and Christopher T. Koetting, A History of the Horrors: The Rise and Fall of the House of Hammer, Scarecrow, 1996.)

Hammer made a deal with MGM to act as distributor, and a budget of £312,000 made this the company's most expensive movie. Production began in August 1964, with six weeks of filming on location in Israel, then continued in the

Elstree studio until October.

The movie begins with a shot of the eternal flame in its grotto, surrounded by flowers, as serene music plays. Suddenly, the scene jumps to black Africans in tribal masks, who dance wildly to thunderous percussion. These contrasting scenes abruptly cut back and forth several more times, and the unintentional humor gets SHE off to an unfortunate start, but a serious (though revisionist) adaptation follows, with the date of Haggard's story advanced to 1918.

World War One has just ended. Three Englishmen, Major Holly, handsome young soldier Leo, and Holly's batman (orderly), Job, party in a Palestinian nightclub on their way home from the Mesopotamian front. John Richardson, a blonde hunk with a golden tan, is the first actor who resembles Leo as described by Haggard. According to director Robert Day, "John Richardson was a great-looking guy—and a nice one—but wasn't much of an actor. Anyway, most of his scenes were with Peter [Cushing], and he didn't stand a chance!" (Hammer Films: An Exhaustive Filmography, Tom Johnson and Deborah Del Vecchio, McFarland, 1996) Richardson consolidated his love-object status by playing opposite Barbra Streisand in ON A CLEAR DAY YOU CAN SEE FOREVER (1970), for which director Vincente Minnelli had the actor photographed as though he were a love goddess from Hollywood's Golden Age.

Despite Day's misgivings, Richardson's sexy good looks and adequate acting skills are just right for this male bimbo role. Leo's main motivation is horniness. It's important that the actor not play him as an intelligent, heroic figure, because Leo's vapid passivity, his lack of true character with moral fiber, proves crucial to the plot. While Peter Cushing's Holly happily doesn't look like an ape (as Haggard describes Holly), he's the brains of the expedition and the

most interesting character, as in the novel.

This movie is more than just light entertainment, though of course it's that, too—loaded up with all the titillating dialogue, lurid situations, provocative costumes, and exotic sets typical of Hammer adventures. But David T. Chantler's script also reflects that in 1964, when SHE was being filmed, many people believed that the world was on the brink of a nuclear holocaust that could wipe the human race off the face of the earth. Chantler relates that fear to the nightmare of the Great War that had ended in 1918.

These three clean, well-dressed men, with money to spend on partying, have just been released from hell on earth. During WWI, while fighting in Europe, the British also engaged in heavy combat with the pro-German Ottoman Empire in Mesopotamia, where 15,814 Allied troops died, 12,804 of them from infections and diseases. The British fought the Turks, in Gaza, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Aqaba, Bathsheeba, Haifa, Nazareth, Beirut, Tripoli, and Damascus. With the Balfour Declaration, the British supported the establishment of Israel as an independent Jewish state, soon to become the locus of yet more fighting. Turkey finally surrendered and signed the Armistice on the battleship Agamemnon, on October 30, 1918. On November 11, 1918, the Great War in Europe also officially ended, with more than 10 million of the estimated 63 million combatants dead. The Spanish Influenza epidemic carried off another 20 million. During WWI, cultural upheavals about race and gender took place on the Allied home fronts. The British gave voting rights to women over 30. Forty-one suffragettes seeking the vote for American women were arrested outside the White House. The French executed femme fatale, dancer, and spy Mata Hari. St. Louis experienced severe race riots with dozens of deaths; quartering of black (then called "Negro") soldiers near white communities in the South led to more race riots; and the National Guard approved its first "Negro" division.

SHE opens with a display of these nationalist, cultural, and racial conflicts in the lively nightclub, where Arabs and drunken soldiers leer at the belly-dancers. (James Bernard later said he took particular pride in his belly-dancing music for this scene.) Delectable Ustane, in a see-through black harem outfit slit down to her waist, lures Leo outside with come-hither looks and suggestive conversation. As Leo leaves with Ustane, other customers start insulting each other's nationalities and ethnic groups. The whole place erupts into a furniture-breaking brawl. There's humor in the scene, but it's an edgy humor. Soon afterwards, instead of going home as they'd planned, Holly, Job, and Leo go on a hazardous march through a desert that leads straight to a hell disguised as a paradise, ruled by a despot and now on

the verge of civil war.

Ustane reluctantly plays Leo for a fool, which is hardly difficult. In the street, kissing him, attracted to him, and feeling guilty, she changes her mind and warns him to leave. She's too late. A thug bashes Leo over the head and drags him into Ayesha's lair, decorated in Middle Eastern opulence, where black-robed Billali compares the unconscious Leo with his striking likeness on a golden medallion.

Billali congratulates Ustane.

Christopher Lee, the formidable Billali, told interviewers Robert W. Pohle, Jr. and Douglas C. Hart that he thought SHE "was a good piece of spectacular film." (The Films of Christopher Lee, Scarecrow Press, 1983.) Lee said in his autobiography that he made this movie while burdened with personal problems. Aside from the usual stresses of an actor's life, a few months earlier, his wife, Gitte, had undergone surgery to give birth to their daughter, Christina, born with deformed legs and feet. Before filming began on SHE, while living as an expatriate in Switzerland to avoid British taxes, Lee "was going through a form of nervous breakdown, without the luxury of men in white coats to beat me up and give me injections . . . I brooded savagely" (Christopher Lee, Tall, Dark and Gruesome: An Autobiography, London: Granada, 1978.)

Lee tried to use work as a cure. "SHE was a perfectly happy film, Ursula Andress was charming, but I carried my burden onto the set with me. I was afflicted by a hangover from my recent experiences, and the sense of personal shambles that goes with them." Maybe this unease contributes to the especially remote, grim bearing of Billali.

When Leo regains consciousness after Billali leaves, muscular black soldiers block the doors. Then white-robed, platinum blonde Ayesha (pronounced "Aye-yee-shah" here and in the 1968 sequel) makes her grand entrance, beguiling Leo with gentle smiles. Suddenly, he no longer wants to escape! Ayesha prompts Leo to recognize her: "I am Ayesha, whom some call She-Who-Waits. And do you know who you are?" Nope. She tells him he's the reincarnation of

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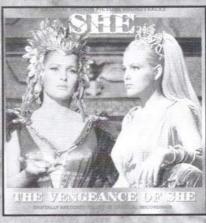


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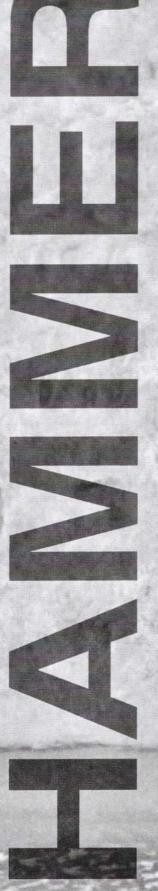
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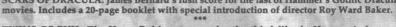


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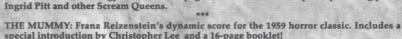
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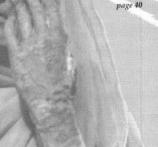
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A FEW WORDS WITH URSULA ANDRESS

Interview by Jessie Lilley Text by Richard Valley

'She is a creature of classic grace and sensual allure, the quintessence of all that is female and, with virtually no effort on her part, the acknowledged high priestess of that cinematic clan of heavenly bodies: the Sex Goddesses.

Thus wrote an anonymous scribe for the June 1965 edition of Playboy, his text accompanying a pictorial feature promoting the Hammer Film version of SHE (1965). The Sex Goddess in question was, of course, Ursula Andress-who had achieved stardom as Honey Ryder in the first James Bond film, DR. NO (1962)-and the photographer was her then-husband, actor/director John Derek. Andress had refused to undress for her film role as Ayesha ("It's often sexier to keep your clothes on"), but had voiced no objection to posing completely nude for Hugh Hefner's famous "Entertainment for Men." She explained, "I'm not against nudity when it is used for a purpose and is done with a maximum of taste, style, and class." In other words, what she was unwilling to do to publicize her movie, she was willing to do to publicize John Derek, whose own postacting purpose, it can be argued, consisted mainly of exploiting his wives and destroying their careers in the process. Said Andress:

You see, I never wanted to be a film star. In fact, I turned down dozens of roles so I could stay with my husband and travel wherever he went. After SHE, I may never make another picture, and then again, I may. Films aren't my whole life; it's my marriage that must always come first."

Continued on page 76

Job (Bernard Cribbens) Horace Holly (Peter Cushing), Ayesha (Ursula Andress) and Leo Vincey (John Richardson) observe the Lost City of Kuma in the 1965 production of SHE.



EMPIRE OF THE IMAGINATION

Continued from page 39 has not long to live—a few decades only before it destroys itself! Then what will be left? I will show you. This will be left." She leads them to a window, where they look down on the desolate ruins of an ancient city. "But my world will not end. It will begin again, here" and she looks at Leo.

Holly says gently but cynically that She is not the first one to dream of absolute power, and She won't be the last.

People don't think of Hammer and serious political commentary as natural companions, yet SHE relates 1918 to the social and political turmoil of the mid-sixties. Consider 1964 alone, the year the movie was filmed. Both the United States and the Soviet Union tested nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. Civil war between Congolese and Belgians raged in what was then the Belgian Congo. Ethiopia fought Somalia. Cypriots fought Turks in Cypress. The Olympics barred South Africa from participation, because of Apartheid. Martin Luther King received the Nobel Peace Prize. Jack Ruby was sentenced to death for murdering Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin of President John F. Kennedy. Thousands rioted in Harlem. Following the Tonkin Gulf incident, the USA sent 5,000 more "advisors" to Vietnam and began air strikes there. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act. In Saudi Arabia, Faisal wrested control from King Saud. The last French troops left Algeria. In Zanzibar, nationalists revolted against the Arab government. Tanganyika and Zanzibar united, to become the Republic of Tanzania. Morocco and Algeria finally ended a border war. Moslems and Hindus fought each other in Calcutta. In Cairo, 13 Arab nations voted to prohibit Israel from using the waters of the Jordan River for irrigation. Malta gained independence from the British Commonwealth. Seventythree years of British colonial rule ended in Northern Rhodesia, renamed the Republic of Zambia. The British fought down rebellions in three former colonies, Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda. Lenny Bruce went on trial for obscenity. In Indonesia, President Sukarno told the United States to "go to hell." Brezhnev deposed Krushchev in the USSR. The Chinese detonated their first atomic bomb.

The times, they were a-changin'. Improved worldwide communications meant that everyone who paid attention to the news knew about all these events, and more. People realistically feared that the Cold War between the USA and the USSR might escalate into a war hot enough to inciner-

ate the planet—the flame of eternal death!

In many ways, SHE is only a typical Hammer movie, not a classic film, yet it embodies a philosophy of its time, a pessimistic view of frail human nature confronted with a culture that justifies atrocities. Leo, a handsome but empty man ("a face," as Billali calls him) is not a hero. He's not evil, either, but he's ordinary, inadequate to stand up against evil. Even after seeing proof that Ayesha is a cruel dictator, Leo remains smitten with her. Love conquers all, including morality. "Is there nothing I will not forgive you?" he muses when they're alone together.

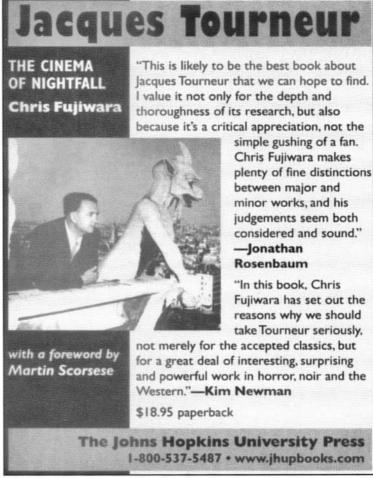
"Nothing," She says confidently.

Later, Holly tells Leo that he might have wanted eternal life at Leo's age, and lived to regret it, but now he's older and wiser. The camera lingers on the innocent flame of his match as the wise father figure lights his pipe.

Still later, Ustane (wearing a simple little see-through white gown) also counsels Leo. She questions his plan to rule a revival of the ancient city. "She has bewitched you with promises of power and grandeur, while I can but offer you my heart and unending loyalty." Ayesha walks out on a balcony just in time to catch Leo in the act of kissing Ustane good-bye, and her jealous nature is reawakened.

As the travelers once again gather in her throne room, a golden curtain drops from a hanging cage. In the cage, Ustane screams as she sees that she's suspended over the lava pit. When Holly warns Ayesha that She will lose Leo if She murders Ustane, Ayesha asks Billali for the dagger She





used to kill Kallikrates. She offers Leo the dagger, the only mortal object that can kill her, She says. If Leo kills Ayesha, Ustane will live. Leo takes the dagger, hesitates . . . and kneels before Ayesha submissively. In his passivity, Leo will follow whoever is stronger, or whoever is unscrupulous enough to jerk his chain the hardest.

Ayesha gloats to Holly, "Look at him. He is no longer the man you knew. He is nothing." When she beckons to Leo to follow her out, he heels like a whipped puppy.

Ayesha sprinkles her beloved corpse of Kallikrates with a liquid that dissolves the body but somehow leaves its clothes intact. Leo prepares to enter the sacred flame with Ayesha in order to become her eternal lover. Meanwhile, elsewhere in the palace, a soldier presents Ustane's father with an urn of her ashes. (Never mind how anyone retrieved the ashes from the lava!) When the soldier begins pouring the ashes disrespectfully on the floor, Haumeid signals an Amahagger attack. The civil war begins, with the white overseer leading the black rebellion.

Holly and Job try to find Leo in the chaos, and in doing so fight on the side of the Amahagger. The good guys end up siding with their former enemies, the black slaves, while the bad guys side with She, the white oppressors, and the black soldiers forced into her service.

Billali pursues his own agenda of revolution. No longer content to serve, he storms into Ayesha's grotto of the sacred flame, deep in the caves. Jungle plants grow there, with nothing for light but the flame itself and a tiny sunlit chimney through the roof. In its yellow phase, the flame is deadly, but when it cools to blue, the flame bestows eternal life on those who bathe in it. Billali refuses to leave, claiming a right to immortality. Contemptuously, he tells Ayesha that Leo will always be afraid. "He is but a face." (Meanwhile, the barbarians are winning, down in the throne room, where they toss soldiers into the lava pit.) As Billali,

dressed in blue, heads for the blue flames of the pillar of fire, Leo tries to stop him in a ferocious sword fight.

Speaking with Pohle and Hart, Lee recalled: "I had a spectacular sword fight with John Richardson in the course of which he nearly decapitated me and I nearly beheaded an electrician when the sword blade broke in the course of the battle." In his autobiography, Lee wrote that filming this scene finally gave him the catharsis to break him out of his depression. "I felt my old self returning. I had thereafter to make a bid for immortality by stepping into the flames but 'she' transfixed me with a spear before I could make it. I died to the best of my ability. It was like old times."

After spearing her loyal henchman in the back, Ayesha enters the flame with Leo. They kiss, wreathed in the blue glow (one of the few special effects that looks primitive, alas; it's an unconvincing, overly-bright blue gel on the lens for the color of the flame, combined with a double exposure). At first, Ayesha and Leo bathe in the flame as if it were a pleasant shower—until She begins to age! Leo emerges unscathed and presumably immortal, but She shrivels, then disintegrates, like a Hammer Films vampire.

In a particularly nice touch, the white flowers hanging behind Leo's head as he watches Ayesha die are Angel's Trumpets (Datura hybrids, related to Jimson weed), also known as Destroying Angels—deadly poison in the guise of beauty. Unable to face immortal life without Ayesha, Leo decides to commit suicide by rushing back into the flame, but when it changes back to hot yellow, he backs off—a coward, just as Billali predicted.

The ending leaves many loose ends and questions, especially the big one about Leo's unworthiness for eternal life. It's an obvious setup for a sequel—and in 1968, Hammer complied, releasing THE VENGEANCE OF SHE.

Concluded Next Issue

In our 10 years of publishing, Scarlet Street has occasionally journeyed down its share of fascinating byways, to lush green jungles with Tarzan of the Apes and Sheena, to tropic I climes in search of the Blue Lagoon, and—in this very issue—to Antarctica and Africa on the trail of She Who Must Be Obeyed. With that in mind, we welcome you to our latest feature—Side Streets—where we'll regularly explore genres not usually covered in our pages. And what better way to start the trip than with three very famous travelers . . .?

DOTTIE

hey defied logic. They defied common sense. They ignored the dictates of good filmmaking and even story structure. They started almost by accident and carried on sporadically for 22 years. With one possible exception, not one of these seven films could be called a good movie in any normal sense of the term. And yet the Road Pictures of Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and Dorothy Lamour are among the unique treasures of the movies, offering, if not true freshness, the illusion of freshness—an illusion that has not dimmed in the 60 years since the first of these films was made. Bob is still funny and appealing, Dotty still the ultimate in self-spoofing ersatz exotica, Bing still just about the coolest guy on the face of the earth-and, best of all, these loopy movies still give the impression that they

were made up as they went along. Due to various legal considerations, the films are no longer controlled by one studio. The first four were part of the Paramount package acquired by MCA years ago and so are owned by Universal. The fifth, released by Paramount but produced by Bing and Bob, has drifted around over the years and when last known belonged to Columbia. The sixth-and this is the most unfortunate case-has completely fallen into public domain, meaning that anyone with a print is free to market it, no matter its condition. And the seventh and final film, produced for United Artists, is still controlled by that company.

Undoubtedly, the films under Universal's banner are the lucky ones, since Universal is the most dedicated of all the studios when it comes to marketing their vintage holdings. Having already released ROAD TO SINGAPORE (1940), ROAD TO ZANZIBAR (1941), ROAD TO MOROC-CO (1942), and ROAD TO UTOPIA (1945) on tape and laser, it's not surprising to find them in equally fine transfers on DVD, though it's certainly questionable why they have chosen to release the films out of sequence by skipping the first

BOB

Despite its legendary status as the picture that forever established Bob and Bing, along with Dotty, as a team, ROAD TO SINGAPORE was mostly a happy accident—one that now seems a little schizophrenic in its results. Director Victor Schertzinger's tackled the assignment in two ways, trying for a genuinely exotic atmosphere in the straight sequences and letting Hope and Crosby fend for themselves in the comedy scenes. Depending on where one lands in it, ROAD TO SINGAPORE offers a pair of comic song and dance men openly defying the audience to take any of this seriously, while the director presents the more dramatic moments very seriously indeed. That it works as well as it does is almost miraculous.

Of course, a large measure of the success of the series is due to the byplay and camaraderie of Hope and Crosby, who very clearly enjoy each other's company. Mixing antagonism and affection, they are not unlike a pair of 10year-old boys, uncomfortable with expressing emotion toward each other unless it emerges in the guise of loving oneupmanship and endearing putdowns. The

> rested development, as is evidenced by the sexual ambiguity of the relationship, which is firmly rooted in the belief that their friendship is more interesting and important than any entanglement with the opposite sex-at least till they run afoul of Dorothy Lamour. Even this isn't BING played with a great degree of seriousness, mostly because the luscious Lamour character (not fully formed in SINGAPORE) is basically "one of the guys," too, only wearing a sarong.

ROAD TO ZANZIBAR is de-

two verge on being textbook cases of ar-

signed along more bizarrely comic lines than was its predecessor. SINGAPORE, however lamely, had something to say about the nature of freedom and living one's own life. Ironically, ZANZIBAR, which has nothing whatever to say, says far more about such freedoms by virtue of its anarchic structure. The boys are more defined here precisely because they aren't defined at all. ZANZIBAR has no illusions about characterizations. Bing and Bob are never anything but Bing and Bob playing at being Chuck Reardon and Hubert "Fearless" Frazier—and sport is even made of the phoniness of Dottie's exotica. As such, ZANZIBAR can be viewed as the first true Road Picture.

The Crosby/Hope relationship achieves its classic pattern with ZANZIBAR—Crosby as the fast-talking sharpster, making a living by his wits and Hope's susceptibility to his most outrageous proposals. When three of Bing's schemes end in disaster, the duo take time out for Hope to heal and Crosby to cook up another scheme-he shows up with a

the road with crosby. Hope. And Lamour

by Ken Hanke _____



PREVIOUS PAGE: Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, and Bing Crosby relax on the set of ROAD TO BALI (1952), the only road picture made in color. ABOVE: Princess Shalmar (Lamour), Jeff Peters (Crosby), Turkey Jackson (Hope), and Mihirmah (Dona Drake) take it on the lam on the ROAD TO MOROCCO (1942).

charmingly unrealistic process-work octopus in a tank! "Probably the greatest idea I ever had. Get this for a set up—we'll build a tank a little bigger than this, see. We'll dress you up like a pearl diver—little sarong or something on you—then you hop into the tank and wrestle with him like you did with Bonzo the Bear!" Crosby's suggestion that they train the supposedly sinister cephalopod are to no avail. "Train him? I'd look fine swimming around with a chair and a whip! You can't train an octopus. They only know from one thing—grab you quick and suck the blood outta you. How would I look swimming around with no blood?" asks Hope. "Just the same," they answer in unison.

The comedy in ZANZIBAR, much of it rooted in the belief that the viewer has seen the previous film (Hope quips, "He musta seen the picture," when a villain short-circuits the famous patty-cake routine), remains fresh and funny. The big moments—a wild scene in which the boys irritate some natives by playing a set of "jungle telegraph" drums, a fight with a gorilla, the cannibal tribe (complete with insane subtitles when the natives debate whether or not the boys are deities—"If he's a god, I'm Mickey Mouse!"), a mock funeral for Lamour where the only memorial recitations the boys can recall are "Dangerous Dan McGrew" and "The Face on the Barroom Floor"—all work splendidly. Even the smaller moments, such as Hope's penchant for trying to hold onto the last bill ("Sticky, ain't it?") every time he pays a debt (a trait he was still exhibiting 30 years

later in 1969's HOW TO COMMIT MARRIAGE), delight with invention and a giddy sense of fun.

Apart from an almost total disregard for structure, ROAD TO MOROCCO offers very little that was not done in ZANZIBAR. (Indeed, Lamour was better served by her Donna LaTour in the previous entry than she is here by the less self-parodying Princess Shalmar.) Still, anarchy reigns supreme and the resultant sloppy, anything-for-a-laugh atmosphere conveys itself to the audience as lovably vintage screwiness. The curious sense of being in on the jokes is naturally enhanced by background information on the picture. As a result, an already funny bit—a camel spitting in Hope's face, seemingly on cue-becomes even funnier when it's known that the moment was completely accidental, the result of the ill-tempered animal taking it into its head to spit at Hope. Its spontaneity is saved for us by the smooth professionalism of Hope and Crosby (who tells the camel, "Good girl!") and the good sense of director David Butler to keep the cameras rolling.

There are so many delightful and hilarious moments in MOROCCO that it's impossible to catalogue them. Gags range from the smallest of touches—cartoonish references to Hope's smoking in the "powder room" as the cause of the shipboard explosion that lands them in North Africa—to the most elaborate set piece, the "divide and conquer" free-for-all staged to distract bad guy Anthony Quinn in order to save Lamour. Again, Crosby is the sharp one, ready





Some Things Never Change Department: In 1941's ROAD TO ZANZIBAR, Bing Crosby conned Bob Hope into taking a flight with a homemade pair of bat wings. It didn't work. Twenty-one years later, in THE ROAD TO HONG KONG, the wings had been turned in for a jet-propelled (and low slung) back pack, but Der Bingle was still trying to get Ol' Ski-nose off the ground. It didn't work. PAGE 45: Dorothy Lamour was already Paramount's jungle queen when she was cast in ROAD TO SINGAPORE (1940) to provide Hollywood's idea of authenticity. She's pictured here in ALOMA OF THE SOUTH SEAS, a 1941 tropic island epic scripted by Donovan's Brain creator Curt Siodmak.

to take advantage of Hope at every opportunity. In this entry, he goes so far as to plan a spot of cannibalism with Hope on the menu. Later, he resorts to such relatively minor transgressions as selling Hope into slavery without so much as asking why the buyer wants him. ("I didn't want to queer the deal.") Learning that Hope is slated to marry Lamour through this sale, Crosby tries to take his friend's place. With this in mind, Hope's subsequent behavior-trying to fob Crosby off on Lamour when he learns that the sole function of his husbandly duties is to fulfill a prophecy that her first husband will die within a week of the marriage—comes as not just understandable, but even fairly mild in the way of retaliation.

Inveterate ad-libbers (albeit often with the aid of their gag writers), there's always a sense of spontaneity about Hope and Crosby's work in the Road pictures, but MO-ROCCO seems entirely off the cuff. Even Frank Butler and Don Hartman joined in the anarchic mood, with a screenplay that at first mildly undercuts its believability, then plunges wildly into outright contempt for storytelling conventions. (They wound up nominated for an Academy Award!) Early in the film, Lamour is handed the improbably flowery line, "When the moon in its last quarter silvers the blossoms of the almond tree," as the time of her wedding. "That's Tuesday night about nine," she quickly adds, killing the exotica in its tracks. The screenplay reaches its zenith when the writers paint themselves into a corner. Having trussed our heroes in sacks and marooned them in the desert, the scene merely dissolves to the pair free of their bonds, crossing the sands. "Say, how did we get loose with our hands and feet tied and everything?" Hope asks. "If we told anybody, they'd never believe us," Crosby informs him confidentially. "Oh. Let's not tell 'em, huh?" suggests Hope. "Shh!" admonishes Crosby as they trudge on, happily sidestepping the plot.

Structurally (if such a word can be used), the film's climax is clearly modeled on that of ZANZIBAR, with the "peaceful" meeting of two tribes of otherwise warring Arabs replacing the cannibals. Lacking the strong central set piece of Hope's fight with the gorilla, MOROCCO opts instead to pile gag upon gag with ever snowballing screwiness. The basic set up, with the boys disguised as Arabs and sowing the seeds of dissent between the tribes, is well conceived. However, it's the wealth of invention-dribbleglasses, makeshift whoopie cushions, cigarettes laced with gunpowder ("What're you doin'? Makin' reefers?" inquires Hope in a line that amazingly passed the censors)—that

makes the sequence work so well, deftly reducing the whole idea of the situational menace to nothing more than schoolboy pranks. The fact that the villainous Arabs respond in kind is clearly drawn from the way the cannibals took to the patty-cake routine in ZANZIBAR, but here it's more carefully built up, making the climactic big scene the least perfunctory and most satisfying in the series.

For those of you who don't go to the movies, let me introduce myself. My name is Robert Benchley. Well, no matter. For one reason or another, the motion picture you're about to see is not very clear in spots. As a matter of fact, it was made to demonstrate how not to make a motion picture, and at the same time win an Academy Award. Now, someone in what is known as the Front Office has thought that an occasional word from me might help to clarify the plot and other vague portions of the film. Personally, I doubt it. Shall we go?'

Despite Benchley's introduction (the humorist's last screen appearance), ROAD TO UTOPIA does not suffer from a lack of clarity, nor a plot that needs explanation, and that's mostly what's wrong with it. Screenwriters Norman Panama and Melvin Frank, who had worked on Hope's radio show and were responsible for the original story of MY FAVORITE BLONDE (1945), here opted to ignore the nearly narrativeless approach of MOROCCO. Instead, they contrived a story overburdened with plot, and then proceeded to commit cinematic heresy by not including so much as a single patty-cake routine. This is not to say that UTOPIA is bad. It is anything but. However, all too often it plays like a straight film with the comic lunacy grafted on. Much of that lunacy, however, is very funny indeed. The film also boasts the classic Hope/Crosby duet, "Put It There, Pal," which is almost the equal of the title tune from MO-ROCCO, and hands Lamour one of the best songs of her career, "Personality."

The film's opening is particularly good, presenting Hope and Lamour as "old folks at home," whose peaceful evening is shattered by the unmistakable sound of Crosby singing. (The song, "Sunday, Monday, and Always," comes from the 1943 Crosby/Lamour vehicle, DIXIE). "Pa, do you hear what I hear?" asks Lamour. "I hope not," groans Hope. "That voice!" enthuses Lamour. "What voice?" sneers Hope. "Listen, what does it sound like?" she presses. "Who'd be selling fish at this hour?" wonders Hope. When Crosby finally appears onscreen (accompanied by two glamour girl "nieces"), Hope complains, "And I thought this was gonna be an A picture.'

This, of course, is only the framing preliminary to the story of just how-against all likelihood and Road tradition-Hope did win the girl and get the goldmine. It's this story that makes up the bulk of the film, which places Crosby and Hope in possession of Lamour's stolen map and the identities of the murderous Sperry and McGurk (Robert Barrat and Nestor Paiva). Gags and quips abound, many of which are brilliantly surrealistic—a snow-capped mountain magically transforms into the Paramount logo, Santa Claus makes a guest appearance, a fish refusing to be caught emerges from a hole in the ice to discuss the point, and a bear (mistaken by Hope in the middle of the night for Lamour!) grumbles, "A fine thing! A fish they let talk! Me, they won't give one stinking line." UTOPIA could have been the best of all Road Pictures were it not for the fact that it insists that the plot is somehow important. Messrs. Panama, Frank, and Walker seem to have thought they were making a Klondike epic in the manner of Chaplin's THE GOLD RUSH (the 1925 film then fresh in the mind with Chaplin's brilliantly narrated 1942 reissue), when in fact they were closer to W.C. Fields' 1933 short film, THE FATAL GLASS OF BEER. Still, it's a film with many fine moments, including one in which Hope sidles up to a bar, orders a lemonade, and then, fearful lest the other patrons think him unmanly, adds gruffly, "In a dirty glass." The in-jokes are all in place, too, the best of which has Crosby losing a talent contest to a trained monkey, prompting Hope to sneer, "Next time I bring Sinatra.'

The DVD releases of MOROCCO and UTOPIA, which were contracted to Image Entertainment by Universal, are little more than adequate. They are utterly bereft of extras (even the tapes sometimes offered trailers) and, while the transfers are good, both films could stand some restoration work. Even at that, the production values are splendid-for example, in the Moroccan street (complete with twinkling stars in the backdrop sky) where Crosby sings the delightful "Ain't Got a Dime to My Name."

While not as funny as either ZANZIBAR or MOROC-CO, ROAD TO RIO is on surer footing than UTOPIA. Once again, no effort is made to convince the viewer that the proceedings are in any way real. Good songs (a staple of the series) and guest bits for The Andrews Sisters, Jerry Colon-

na, and the marvelous Wiere Brothers, plus Gale Sondergaard's svelte villainy and a Carmen Miranda impression from Hope make RIO an unqualified delight.

Part of the success of RIO is attributable to director Norman Z. McLeod, a former cartoonist and one of the few filmmakers to survive directing two Marx Brothers films (1931's MONKEY BUSINESS and 1932's HORSE FEATH-ERS). In RIO, McLeod's own vision fits like a glove right from the film's opening credits, which feature the animated names of Crosby, Hope, and Lamour doing a samba. The sense that one is watching an animated cartoon with living people is keenly felt throughout and helps sustain the fantastic world in which the action takes place.

In many respects, RIO is a compendium of the previous Road Pictures—its "Apalachicola, Fla." vaudeville song and dance number is a (better) version of the "Good Time Charlie" turn in UTOPIA, the burning of the carnival that sends the boys on the run to Brazil is an elaborate variation on the opening of ZANZIBAR, and so on. In effect, RIO is a summing up of all the films: the ultimate Road Picture for fans.

The gags and routines in RIO are almost nonstop and many are as physical as verbal, especially the barbering scene (filched from McLeod's MONKEY BUSINESS). If anything, the Hope/Crosby characters are more disreputable than usual, with Der Bingle up to his old tricks. He secures them a booking with Johnson's Mammoth Carnival ("The seals couldn't make it, huh?" moans Hope), without, of course, bothering to inform Hope that he's slated to ride a bicycle on the high wire. (Watch for horror great Tor Johnson in this sequence.) The typical doublecross is in effect immediately, but Hope is here presented as amazingly lowdown himself-before sneaking from their hotel room, he pauses to swipe the Gideon Bible!

The jokes regularly verge on the unwholesome. After Hope accidentally burns down the carnival, the vengeful owner tells his minions, "If you break his legs, don't tear the tights, they belong to me." Later, when Crosby defends his desire to help Lamour by comparing her plight to that of another girl, Hope recoils in horror at the memory. "You mean the wife of that sword swallower? Chased us six blocks, burping daggers all the way!" One routine (pilfered from Crosby's 1936 film ANYTHING GOES) is built around the duo swaying back and forth to simulate the rocking of a ship, the better to nauseate a passenger out of his breakfast.



Come Back,

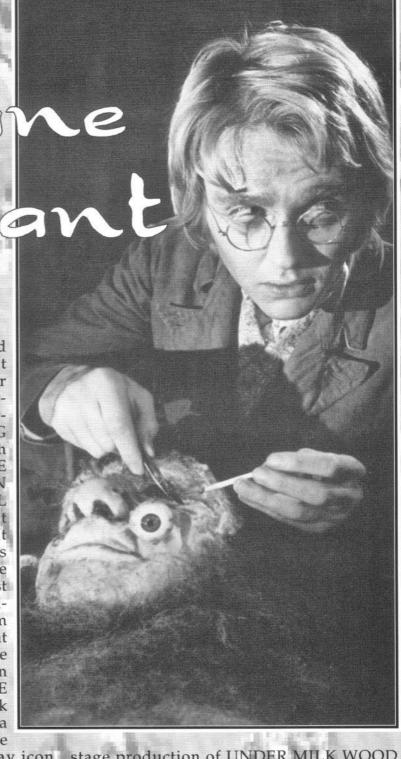
An Interview by Kevin G. Shinnick

ith his blonde hair and good looks, Shane Briant was the Golden Boy of Hammer Horror in the latter days of the company's 20year reign of cinematic terror, appearing in STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING and DEMONS OF THE MIND (both 1972), CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER (1973), and FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL (1974). Surprisingly, Hammer didn't relegate him to bland hero roles, but cast him as troubled—and sometimes psychotic-young men in his first three films, and as a baby-faced mad scientist (opposite Peter Cushing's veteran madman) in his last. Taking a break from The Studio That Dripped Blood, Briant journeyed to the United States, where he starred on late-night television in the 1973 Dan Curtis version of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. Back in England, he made an impression as a mascaraed and rouged male prostitute

in a dramatization of the life of gay icon Quentin Crisp, THE NAKED CIVIL SER-VANT (1975). His other films include THE MACKINTOSH MAN (1973), HAWK THE SLAYER (1980), LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOV-ER (1981), MINNAMURRA (1989), and TUN-

NEL VISION (1995).

Shane Briant was born in London in 1946, and attended the law school at Trinity College Dublin. His first acting role came with a



stage production of UNDER MILK WOOD, for which he received a 1971 nomination from the London theater critics for Best Newcomer. In addition to acting, Briant is also a successful novelist with four books to his credit, including The Webber Agenda (1994), Witkids (1999), and Bite of the Lotus (2001). He's lived in Sydney, Australia, since 1983, and it was there that Scarlet Street found him for this rare interview.

Shane Briant: I was born in London. My father, Keith Briant, was an author and my mother, Elizabeth Nolan, was an actress; she did plays in the West End, plays with Rex Harrison and Trevor Howard and people like that.

Scarlet Street: Was it because of your mother's career that you became an actor?

SB: It could have been that, I suppose, but it's really difficult to tell how one started. I started at school. My school had a tradition of taking Shakespearean tours overseas during the holidays, so I used to do that every year till I was about 17. Then I went to University—Trinity College—and studied law, and started acting professionally in my second year. I finished my law degree, but I was in the University Players. Then I did plays professionally, and then television and films at the same time.

SS: What was your first play?

SB: The first production I ever did professionally was HAMLET in Dublin. I played the title role—a very good way of starting! (Laughs) I always say modern-day Hamlets are too old, by and large; he's always played by people who are 30 years old and he should be played by someone in his early twenties. I did several plays in Dublin, and then some television and a film called THE RED BARON. That was my very first film. I only had a tiny part.

And then I did a play called CHILDREN OF THE WOLF with Yvonne Mitchell, who had won a British Academy Award for WOMAN IN A DRESSING GOWN. That was in the West End, and through that I was put under contract to Hammer Films for two years.

SS: As a result of your role in CHILDREN OF THE WOLF?

SB: Yes. It was kind of a modern-day Greek tragedy, about a woman who deserts her two children. Then, 21 years later, they entice her back to the old house where they used to live and confront her with what she's done. It had all these Greek classical tragic overtones to it. Eventually, they murder the father and the young boy murders his mother and is rejected by his sister. It's everything that you expect of a Greek tragedy—only set in modern days!

SS: All that family tragedy and hints of incest must have prepared you to star in Hammer's DEMONS OF THE MIND!

SB: Exactly! (Laughs) The head of Hammer Films, Michael Carreras, saw me in the play and thought I'd be right for the film.

SS: You worked with one of the new crop of directors at the time, Peter Sykes.

SB: I wonder what happened to Peter Sykes? Has he gone on to do any other things? I've never seen him again!

SS: Well, he also directed TO THE DEVIL A DAUGHTER, Hammer's last horror movie. You also worked with Terence Fisher, on FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL.

SB: Well, with Terry Fisher, he'd reached the stage where the film almost directed itself! He had his format and he knew exactly what worked and what didn't. He was extremely professional and a very nice man. Peter Sykes was very young at the time, and he was feeling his way more and trying new things, something a bit different. He was trying to be innovative, whereas Terry Fisher was intent on giving the people who loved Hammer what they love best, which was the traditional Hammer film, another dose of the same thing—sort of like TERMINATOR 15. (Laughs)

SS: DEMONS OF THE MIND was a psychological thriller.

SB: It was a new concept in terms of Hammer films. There wasn't a monster anymore. Well, there was a monster, but it was different in so far as they were trying to take it into the psychology of the thing instead of having vampires and monsters with three heads. In that respect, it was different.

\$\$: You arrived on the scene late in Hammer's history. They were looking for a new approach, weren't they?

PREVIOUS PAGE: Shane Briant played a dedicated young doctor with an eye toward creating monsters in Hammer's FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL (1974). Earlier in the story, he made a considerable splash when he was hosed down in an insane asylum under the watchful eyes of Madeline Smith.



SB: Sir James Carreras had just left and his son, Michael, was in charge. To some extent they were a bit lost; I think they felt the loss of James a lot. The moment that he left, things began to fall apart. The other major executive, Anthony Hinds, also left at that time and Michael was left to sort it all out.

SS: He tried everything, including casting stunts. Your sister in DEMONS OF THE MIND was originally going to be played by Marianne Faithfull.

of the latter. The insurers wouldn't take the risk on her.

SS: Well, her drug problems weren't exactly a secret. You did wind up with another pop singer in the cast: Paul Jones.

SB: Yes, that's right! They were trying to catch the youth market; in those days, if you could get a rock star in your movie, you immediately got a larger and maybe a more youthful audience. It's funny, but I saw Paul in London while I was doing a series recently. We were staying in

or two of

SS: Quite a change of pace!

SB: Well, he's getting older, as are we all. You can't change it, you know. Some people try, but—well, I think some people are a bit ridiculous!

SS: There's a certain similarity between DE-MONS OF THE MIND and CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER. They both have a brother and sister under the control of a demonic parent. In DEMONS, your character is guilty of the crimes, but also innocent.

SB: Well, in DEMONS, the character characters as believable as possible-



"The stunt coordinator came over and said, 'Are you okay, Shane? That really looked great, but we have to do it again because you seemed to hesitate when Paul came through the window.' I said, 'I seemed to hesitate! What are you talking about, I seemed to hesitate! I thought the guy was dead!"

"You must never go alone to another man's room at night," and she says, "Why?" He says, "Never mind! You don't need to know these things!" Every day we used to fall around laughing! Linda Purl and myself-we used to read through these parts early in the morning and laugh ourselves silly so that we could actually say it with some conviction during the day! If you have a poor script, it's much more challenging to do a good job of it. Any actor can make a success out of a really good script. That's why people win Oscars-not just because they're good actors, but because they've gotten one of the best parts of the year. You can be the best actor in the world and have a shitty script and never win an Oscar!

SS: Even with a horror script, don't you find aspects of the character to make it more interesting for yourself and the audience?

SB: I always wonder how I can make it more interesting. If the character is not really fleshed out that well, you do as much as you possibly can. If it's a fantastic part, you don't really need to do much else; you just need to make sure that the part is brought accurately and convincingly to the screen. If he's just a bad guy—well, I've played bad guys all my life, and a bad guy can be very boring if he's just a bad guy. If he's a bad guy with a flaw-for instance, that he happens to like children-that makes it interesting. I did a film with Mark Harmon called TILL THERE WAS YOU, and the bad guy was a bad guy all the way through. He gets shot at the end, and I said, "Look, why doesn't he die because of the one spark of human kindness he has in him, which eventually leads to his downfall?" My idea was that he should have a relationship, quite innocent, with a little black kid. And every time he sees the little black kid, he aims his finger at him and says, "Bang, bang! You're dead!" At the end of the film, just as the bad guy is leaving with all the gold, the little black kid sees his gun, picks it up, and says, "Bang, bang! You're dead!"-and, of course, he shoots him. SS: Nice touch!

SB: It made the character more interesting. Even in LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOV-ER, where a lot of people think Sir Clifford is a beast, I portrayed him as a selfish man but tried to make the audience understand why he was so selfish.

SS: The business with the kid and the gun was certainly a good idea.

SB: Well, I have lots of ideas; I'm never short of ideas! (Laughs) The only problem is that quite often the director says, "We don't want to do that" or "We don't have time to do that" or "We don't need that," or the writer says, "I don't like that!" It

depends on the type of production. When you have the leading role it's always pretty easy to do what you like, providing the director is on your side. But if you have the third or fourth lead and try to flesh out your part and make it interesting, then the other actors—who are often, shall we say, a trifle selfish—try and put the kibosh on it.

SS: They think you're making too much of your part at the expense of theirs.

SB: But I'm never short of ideas! Never! I always have too many ideas! People tell me, "No, that's ridiculous; that's too much, Shane!"

SS: Too many shadings!

SB: Too many shadings, yes—or else I'm making the character too bizarre! In THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, there's a scene where Dorian goes to a brothel. In the script, Dorian asks the brothel keeper, the madam, for her daughter. It's never stated how old the daughter is, but the madam obviously takes great exception to the fact that Dorian wants to screw her daughter. Then he gives her so much money that she gives in, they go upstairs, he opens the door, and there's this very young girl. Well, ABC and the authorities in America said, "No, no, no! We can't possibly have someone going to bed with what looks like an underage girl." So the scene was going to be cut, and I said to Glenn Jordan, the director, "Let's do something where you don't actually see what's in the room, and let the audience's imagination fill in the details. It's even worse when you don't see it, and they can't complain about it!" So in the scene I asked the madam for something, but you didn't hear what it was. She looks at me in disgust and I give her the money, then we go up to the room. The camera is behind me, and when I open the door the camera is positioned inside the room looking at my reaction. Behind me, the madam is almost vomiting because it's so disgusting. I look down at something on a bed, I look with absolute disgust and horror, and then this awful, twisted smile comes to my face, as if to say, "This is disgusting, but it's very interesting and maybe it's so bizarre I might do it!" Well, when the show was broadcast, people said the scene where Dorian goes into the room and makes love to a dwarf or deformed child was so horrible. I said, "Whatever made you think it was a dwarf or deformed child?" They said, "Well, it was the expression on your face!"

SS: They filled in the blank with something they personally considered horrible.

SB: Yes, which is more interesting than showing a 15-year-old girl. That's pretty run of the mill, isn't it?

SS: In the Ozarks, yes. Were you familiar with the Oscar Wilde novel before you played Dorian?

SB: Oh, yes, I'd read it before! Most of the script was not faithful to the novel. They changed the story so they could introduce different characters, so Dorian Gray could fall in love and plan to marry. He never did that! I really couldn't understand why they chose to do that. I suppose somebody or other thought it was good for the script.

SS: They did the same thing in the 1945 film. The character of Dorian Gray is so ambiguous that he's left open to a number of interpreta-

tions, isn't he?

SB: He is, yes. Would he have led the same life had he aged instead of the portrait, would he have become corrupt without the influence of Sir Henry Wotton? I think he was influenced by Sir Henry originally. Then when he saw that he could basically have a really good, decadent time—because Sir Henry said, "You're young; enjoy yourself while it lasts!"—and he realized that the portrait would age and he could do anything and remain the same, that took him overboard. He thought, "Why should I bother being nice or doing the right thing? I can do whatever I like and I'll never grow old!"

SS: Was DORIAN GRAY your first experience with American TV?

SB: Yes, it was! It was wonderful! Dan Curtis came to London, because he tried to cast it in America and hadn't found anyone who was sufficiently English. At least, that's what he told me. I saw him on a Wednesday and he said, "The only problem is that Dorian's a dark-haired boy!" I said, "Oh no, no, no, Mr. Curtis! You're thinking of the Hurd Hatfield version! He was dark-haired in that, but actually in the book he's a blonde!" I thought I was just bullshitting, but it turned out I was right! (Laughs) Dan said, "Oh, really? I didn't realize!" So I saw him on Wednesday, was cast on Thursday, flew out on Friday, and was working in Culver City on Saturday morning! It was like every young actor's dream, because I was only 22 or 23 at the time.

SS: Another thing that got past the censors was Dorian's homosexuality, when he opens a door and a young man is waiting for him.

SB: That was done to show Dorian's depravity, though it's not actually suggested in Wilde's book. Both Glenn and I thought, if you're doing a show in 1973 and all Dorian does is go to bed with women—well, what's so depraved about that? So he drinks a lot! So he smokes! So what? You had to do something that the audience considered depraved.





LEFT: Dr. Simon Helder (Shane Briant) has his wounds tended to by the mute Sarah (Madeline Smith) in FRANK-ENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL, the last film in Hammer's famed Frankenstein series. RIGHT: Dr. Helder and Sarah lend a helping hand to Baron Victor Frankenstein (Peter Cushing), who—obviously—is preparing to lend a helping hand to his latest monstrosity.

SS: And given the times, homosexuality filled the bill. It's also hinted that Dorian's influence over Alan Campbell is a sexual one.

SB: Exactly! When he persuades Alan Campbell to get rid of the artist's body, Alan says, "No! I won't do it!" Dorian says, "I don't want to threaten you, but let me just give you this list of names." They're all men's names. It seemed quite apparent that Alan Campbell was gay, and that Dorian had a hold over him in that respect, and that certainly he'd had an affair with him. Alan even says, "I was waiting for you to call me, Dorian."

SS: Until recently, there's been considerable hesitancy on the part of actors to play gay characters, yet you not only played Dorian Gray in the seventies but appeared as a gay man in THE NAKED CIVIL SERVANT.

SB: That was one of the best shows I've ever done; I think Jack Gold is an ultrafine director, especially with actors. To some extent, he's been unlucky either with his choice of films or what he's been

offered. He's never been given a film worthy of his talent. But he was a terrific director—I remember him saying to the five of us playing the male hookers, "I just want you to go to town and really go over the top. Enjoy yourselves!" Most of the other guys were a bit embarrassed to really go the whole hog! I just thought, "Well, go for it! Have a good time! Who cares! If someone is going to suggest that I'm gay and can't play other roles, then I'll prove them wrong with the next one that I do!" Of course, if you're going to play nothing but gay roles, people think, "Oh, we can't have him! Everyone thinks he's gay!" For leading roles, that's probably important.

SS: Possibly—but more than in the States, British actors are not afraid to take that risk.

SB: No, that's true.

SS: On DORIAN GRAY, did you have any rehearsal period before taping began?

SB: We had eight days rehearsal, and then we shot it in four. We did a three-

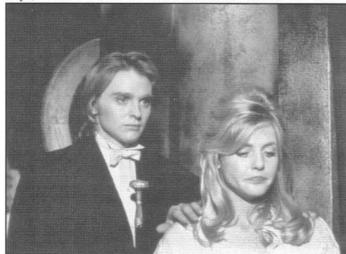
hour program from start to finish in 12 days, which must be some kind of a record! (Laughs) We were really going! We rehearsed in the Culver City studios—not the ones now, but on the old GONE WITH THE WIND lot, and then we shot it with four videotape cameras. We went from start to finish almost in order, from eight in the morning until eight at night, nonstop.

SS: So it was almost like doing a play?

SB: Almost, yes. We hardly ever had to reshoot—thank God! In those days, I could remember my lines! (Laughs) As I get older it's harder to remember lines, but if a lot of people had cocked up their lines we would never have finished it in four days. Dan Curtis is a very strong character, strong-willed and a hard task-master. If he says you shoot it in four days, you shoot it in four days!

SS: You were lucky to have a good director.
SB: Glenn Jordan is one of the nicest and most talented people I know. I've been

LEFT: Dorian Gray (Shane Briant) has fallen in love with the innocent Sybil Vane (Vanessa Howard). Her suicide will be the first of Dorian's crimes and the first to mar the beauty of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. RIGHT: Briant and Lois Daine are Paul and Sara Durward, an aristocratic family beset by a vampiric heritage and bad hair days, in Hammer's innovative CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER (1973).





waiting about 23 years, now, to work with him again. I see him every time I get to the States. We have lunch, but he never has anything suitable for me. He seems to go from Emmy Award-winning production to Emmy Award winning-production. Mostly very American projects, but I'm sure that if he had a production that was suitable, he'd find something for me. When he did LES MISÈRABLES, he offered me something, but unfortunately I was busy.

SS: Do you have fond memories of the cast of DORIAN GRAY

SB: Oh, yes! Whenever I think of DOR-IAN GRAY, I remember the people who were in it with me. Many went on to do wonderful things in the States. I went back to England, which I never should have done. I should have stayed and waited for my career to take an upturn, because that was a terrific showcase for

me. And it got very good notices! But I went back to England expecting them to call and, of course, nobody gives you a call in England; you're either there or you're not there! John Karlen went on to do CAGNEY AND LACEY, and Linda Kelsey did LOU GRANT. Fionnula Flanagan went on to do HOW THE WEST WAS WON. Most of the people in that show got very rich and I went back to England and got very poor! (Laughs) It makes me laugh, but obviously I made the wrong decision. Maybe it's the Curse of Dorian Gray!

SS: Whatever happened to your portrait from the show?

SB: On the last day, the prop man cut out the portrait-which was six feet long and four feet wide-and rolled it up and gave it to me, which was lovely. I went off to a party that Fionnula Flanagan was giving up in the hills and I left it in the back of the cab! I figured it was lost, so I thought I'd put an ad in the trades: "Lost! The Picture of Dorian Gray! Apply-Gray!" and put in brackets, "But it's THE MONSTER FROM HELL. changed!" (Laughs)

SS: Was it ever found?

SB: Yes, it was found. I rang up the cab company the next day and they had it. So I still have it—but it hasn't changed! SS: You keep praying for it to change, right? SB: I do! I never used to stop praying! I used to stand in front of it and say, "Please, I'm getting old! Is there something you can do?" (Laughs) But no, the picture is still as good as ever and I'm getting old and wrinkled.

SS: Speaking of staying young forever, let's talk about STRAIGHT ON TILL MORN-ING, the Hammer film in which you were kind of a murderous Peter Pan in Mod London. It was based on a play, wasn't it?

SB: Yes, and to some extent the play wasn't structured well enough. One should have felt very sorry for him, but one didn't, really. He should never have killed his dog. That's the big mistake in any movie, to kill a dog, because the audience doesn't like that; I don't like it myself. You should never be unkind to children or kill dogs if you want anyone to have sympathy with you.

SS: Were there references to J.M. Barrie's PE-TER PAN that didn't make it into the film? SB: Not really, no. Apart from the fact that Peter calls the girl Wendy, there was nothing. Of course, the title—first star to the right and straight on till morning-is the direction to Never Never Land. It was quite a nice idea, but it didn't get good reviews, basically because it was too violent and reviewers didn't like that very much. I remember the critic in The Sunday Times, she said, "really trashy and Rita Tushingham deserves a better film, and so does Mr. Briant." I thought, "Oh, that's good!" and then she said, "So indeed does the dog!" (Laughs) Hammer was really hoping the film would mark their transition from Gothic horror to different films and quality pictures. STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING was a disappointment

Shane Briant" and then the next day With the help of Shane Briant, Peter Cushing has put in, "Found! The Picture of Dorian the world on a string in FRANKENSTEIN AND and it was very difficult for her to

in that respect, because it didn't get good reviews and didn't make money.

SS: It got a very poor release from the distributor, which couldn't have helped.

SB: When I signed with Hammer, I was supposed to do a remake of something like JANE EYRE—not JANE EYRE itself, but something along those lines. It appealed to me, because it wasn't just another vampire picture. I was also supposed to star in a biography of Bram Stoker. I was going to play Stoker, but instead of doing those two projects I ended up making DEMONS OF THE MIND, STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING, and the Frankenstein film. Instead of doing something that really interested me, I did FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL, which was just another Hammer horror picture. They didn't want to take another risk; they thought they'd get Terry Fisher and do another Frankenstein movie and make money. Get themselves out of trouble!

SS: After those films and CAPTAIN KRO-NOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER, Hammer terminated your contract.

SB: They were in too much financial trouble. They didn't want me under contract doing nothing. It was better for them to have no one under contract and just get people when they needed them.

SS: Did you have refusal rights on scripts? SB: No, nothing like that. It was just the beginning of my career and I was glad to be under contract.

SS: CAPTAIN KRONOS was another attempt to take Hammer Horror in a new direction. Brian Clemens, who's best known for THE AVENGERS, wrote and directed it. Was he a talented director?

SB: He was okay. Is he still alive?

SS: Yes, alive and working.

SB: Then I'd better say he was wonderful! (Laughs) I didn't think CAPTAIN KRO-NOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER was tremen-

dously successful. It had some nice ideas, but even in those days it was a bit passé. I liked the idea of the Kronos character played by Horst Janson, and John Cater as his hunchbacked assistant, but I thought the vampire's family was ridiculous, frankly. We were dressed up in ridiculous clothes, and I thought the actress playing my sister couldn't act to save her life! The mother had such dreadful lines! Home came her husband, looking like he'd just been unearthed from a tomb.

SS: Which was pretty much the case.

SB: . . . with worms crawling out of his eyes, and the mother said something like, "Come to me, my darling, and give me a big kiss!" I mean, it's a bit bizarre.

SS: Well, love is blind. Lois Daine, who played your sister, wore men's clothing and had a short, mannish, out-of-period hair style.

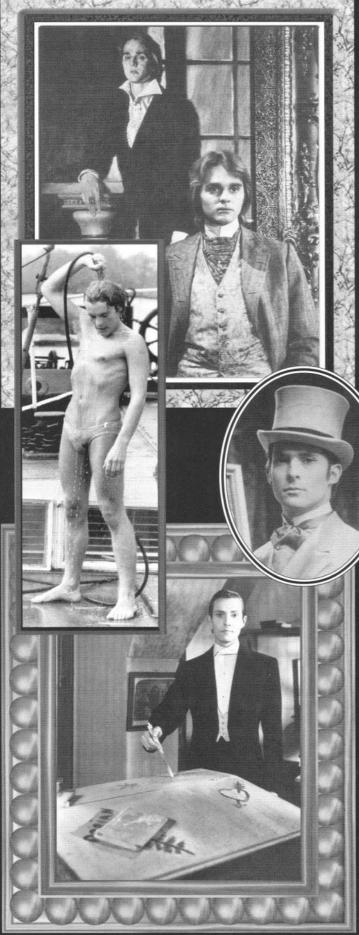
SB: It was really an atrocious design! There was no reason for that! I thought she looked quite ridiculous in that wig and those silly clothes, give any performance under those circumstances. Well, why they put

me in an incredibly silly Shirley Temple wig is something I can't imagine, either! It's not a film I remember with affection. When I look back on it, I think, "Christ! What must I have looked like!" (Laughs) SS: Did you get to use your own hair in FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL?

SB: Yes, well, I always try and use my own hair. Unless you're working with top-class American professionals, they tend to just slap an awful wig on you and you look like a piece of shit!

SS: So the hair was fine, but you didn't like the film?

SB: I felt it was scraping the bottom of the barrel for ideas. I didn't think it was anything particularly new-just building another body, really. The body looked ludicrous. It would have been better if it didn't look like this awful, rubberized suit. I remember talking to Dave Prowse



The Pictures of

Dorian Gray

Part Two of a study of the Oscar Wilde classic and its many dramatizations...

by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley

n March 1, 1945, MGM released the first sound film version of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. Albert Lewin wrote and directed. The film starred George Sanders as Lord Henry Wotton, Angela Lansbury as Sybil Vane, and Hurd Hatfield as Dorian Gray, with MGM contract players Donna Reed and Peter Lawford as characters absent from the original Oscar Wilde novel.

sent from the original Oscar Wilde novel.

Rumors persist to this day that Lawford was considered for the lead, and the handsome, bisexual, English actor would not have been an inappropriate choice to play the handsome, bisexual, English Dorian, but he was passed over for the handsome, homosexual, American Hatfield. Neither actor embodied Wilde's description of the novel's blonde, blue-eyed Adonis, but by 1945 very few (if any) filmgoers remembered the 55-year-old book's details or the popular notion that Wilde's blonde, blue-eyed lover, Lord Alfred Douglas, was its inspiration. (The notion was incorrect; Wilde never met Douglas till well after The Picture of Dorian Gray had been published.) In rapidly failing health at the time of the premiere, Lord Alfred was in no condition to remind anyone, and by March 20, at age 75, he was dead.

Under the leadership of "benign" tyrant Louis B. Mayer, MGM was considered the most conservative of Hollywood's major studios, the home of splashy backstage musicals starring Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, hospital dramas stuffed with Lionel Barrymore bromides, and family comedies with Rooney as teenaged Andy and Lewis Stone as his preternaturally wise dad, Judge Hardy. It was MGM that forced Nick and Nora Charles (William Powell and Myrna Loy) to cut back on the booze and become doting parents, and, even though they allowed Tarzan and Jane (Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan) to live in a tree without benefit of clergy, they gave them a child only via airmail, when a plane carrying a baby Boy (Johnny Sheffield) crashed on their African escarpment.

But the studio had a perverse side that periodically bubbled to the surface in what might best be called MGM's Big Parade of Kinkiness. FREAKS (1932), with its titular outcasts and fun-filled finale of castration and mutilation, may have shocked Mayer into sweeping it under the corporate carpet, but the film was hardly an aberrationjust consider some of MGM's other pictures from the same year. RED DUST was sparked by the frank sexual shenanigans of Jean Harlow, whose comparatively realistic persona made her more of a threat to "common decency" than Paramount's Mae West. KONGO, a remake of the silent WEST OF ZANZIBAR (1928), starred Walter Huston in Lon Chaney's role of a crippled maniac who tortures and sells into harlotry a rival's daughter (Virginia Bruce), only to learn that the syphilis-riddled girl is his own. In THE MASK OF FU MANCHU, Dr. Fu (Boris Karloff) not only parades before our eyes a grotesque gallery of death devices, but makes bloody good use of them, while nymphomaniacal daughter Fah Lo Suee (Myrna Loy) strips and whips the hunky hero (Charles Starrett) before turning him over to daddy for chemical "refinement." All in all, it's a wonder

the studio motto wasn't changed to "More Stars in Our Gutter Than There Are in the Heavens.

The advent of the Production Code in 1933 calmed things down considerably, but never completely. MGM offered Saturday-night sadists MAD LOVE (1935), in which Dr. Gogol (Peter Lorre) falls for a Grand Guignol star (Frances Drake), and grafts the hands of a guillotined knife-thrower (Edward Brophy) onto the wrists of her concert-pianist husband (Colin Clive), and NIGHT MUST FALL (1937), in which an affable Welsh psychopath (affable Robert Montgomery) harbors a severed head in a hatbox. Then there's the strange case of DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1941), featuring a Freudian nightmare in which the changeable physician (Spencer Tracy), standing atop a hansom cab, whips the two women in his dual life (Lana Turner and Ingrid Bergman, taking the place of the carriage horses).

A film factory capable of such source story an acknowledged in- mention that the latter is "gay with songs." spiration for Wilde's novel), THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY brought its own brand of flagitious horseplay to big-

town picture palaces and rural bijous.

I sent my soul through the invisible, Some letter of that after-life to spell: And by and by my soul returned to me, And answered, "I myself am Heaven and Hell." -The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

Following the opening credits, the above quotation appears onscreen. The story proper begins in 1886, and therefore must conclude several years into the 20th century. The cynical Lord Henry Wotton arrives, by horse-drawn carriage, at the studio of Basil Hallward (Lowell Gilmore). In the carriage, Lord Henry has been reading the decadent poetry of Charles Baudelaire (a particular favorite of Wilde), Les Fleurs du Mal. The narrator (an uncredited Sir Cedric Hardwicke, perfectly in tune with the material) tells us: "Lord Henry Wotton had set himself early in life to the serious study of the great aristocratic art of doing absolutely nothing. He lived only for pleasure, but his greatest pleasure was to observe the emotions of his friends while experiencing none of his own. He diverted himself by exercising a subtle influence on the lives of others."

"Professional cad" George Sanders had already made more than three dozen films since 1936, acting for Alfred Hitchcock in REBECCA and FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT (both 1940) and playing Simon Templar (The Saint) and Gay Lawrence (The Falcon) in two popular mystery series for RKO. He had worked under Lewin before, to great acclaim, as the Gauguinesque artist in THE MOON AND SIXPENCE (1942). The star would go on to win a Best Supporting Actor Oscar as Addison DeWitt, a sardonic manipulator not unlike Lord Henry, in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's ALL ABOUT EVE (1950). DeWitt's voiceover introduction, in fact, not only mocks the Bible, but echoes the introduction of Lord Henry: "My name is Addison DeWitt. My native habitat is the theater. In it, I toil not. Neither do I spin. I am a critic

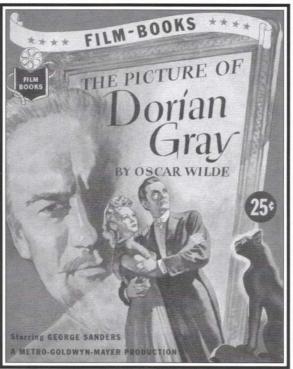
and commentator."

Though it isn't his actual profession-he has no profession-Lord Henry is also a critic and commentator, not only of art, but of society and the lives of his friends. He is not, however, without his own appetites. When he walks into Basil's studio and admires his friend's unfinished picture of Dorian Gray, the audience is denied a glimpse of the painting. Instead, from behind the easel, the camera watches the discreetly carnal expression on Henry's face as he absentmindedly lifts his walking stick and strokes the wood. It's a subtle gesture, not grossly phallic as some critics describe it, but unmistakably sexual all the same. Anyone who spots it will understand the nature of Henry's attraction to Dorian. (As we shall see, Basil encourages Dorian's better nature, while Henry pulls Dorian into selfish hedonism, but the same sexual impulse drives both mentors.)

Basil plans to give the paintbeauty, including neo-Classical art

and ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman artifacts and replicas. By the time of Wilde's era, gay men already used Greek god imagery as code for same-sex relationships. When Basil and Henry retire to the garden to talk about life, love, and Dorian Gray, a bas relief of the face of Pan, hanging on a courtyard wall, sometimes shares the frame with either man. Pan, a Greek nature god adopted by the Romans and other pagans in Europe and Asia, implies both good and evil aspects of power, sexuality, and hedonism. The servant of Dionysius, also known as Bacchus (patron of bacchanalias and dionysian frenzies), Pan was "the author of sudden sexual forays against girls and boys alike . . . Sexually voracious, Pan was also the disappointed suitor. Up in the woods and hills, men still heard Pan's bewitching music . . . (Robin Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians, Alfred A. Knopf, 1987). The Romans used a Pan ritual to test girls for virginity. The Christians later incorporated Pan (along with Baal and other gods) into their concept of Satan.

Basil Hallward is calm, dignified, and morally impeccable, but his Appollonian mask hides a Dionysian heart.



gleeful depravity was capable of The back cover of this MGM filmbook adapta- ing to Dorian rather than sell it, most anything, and, within a few tion of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY (1945) because, "I put too much of myself years of DR. JEKYLL AND MR. incongruously trumpets the studio's family musi- into it." No starving artist, Basil HYDE (its Robert Louis Stevenson cal MEET IN ST. LOUIS (1944), but does at least lives surrounded by luxury and



Superficially, Basil seems nothing like Pan, but displays the god in his garden. Basil disapproves of Henry's self-indulgence and says he'd rather that his friend not meet and corrupt Dorian, but does nothing to drive Henry away. Basil criticizes Dorian later for his Bacchanalian excesses, but the sensuous, magical portrait, which arouses such interest in Henry and inspires Dorian's narcissistic downfall, results from Basil's brush strokes.

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but here a huge, dead turtle hangs from the ceiling as a decoration. A big, cartoonish sign near the entrance advertises "Dr. Look," with a painting of a disembodied, Cyclopean eye-resembling J. R. R. Tolkien's later Eye of Sauron!-that seems to stare at the patrons. (Eyes, mirrors, and-obviously-portraits appear a lot in this movie: image and perception versus reality.) So detailed were DORIAN GRAY's slums that they reappeared, in glorious Techni-color, in the dazzling "Limehouse Blues" number of Vin-cente Minnelli's ZIEGFELD FOLLIES (1946).

Inside the noisy den, Dorian finds a vulgar marionette show in progress. Among the working-class patrons, the beautiful young man looks conspicuous in his immaculate top hat and cape. Proprietor Malvolio Iones (Billy Bevan as a Cockney, not the Jewish caricature of Wilde's story) calls attention to "a gentleman" by obsequiously giving Dorian a seat at the front table. Then Sybil Vane comes onstage—as a music hall singer, not the Shakespearean tragedienne of the novel. As she sings "The Little Yellow Bird," Dorian gazes at her with a besotted expression strikingly similar to the one that appeared on his face when he fell in love with himself.

may die.") Turtles symbolize long life in Asian mythology, As the audience joins in the chorus, Sybil notices Dorianand it's love at first sight.

Angela Lansbury is heartbreakingly sweet and vulnerable as Sybil Vane, a role that earned her a Golden Globe Award as Best Supporting Actress. She also received an Oscar nomination. This was her second film role at MGM, and Sybil's purity proved her versatility, since she had just played the sluttish Cockney maid in George Cukor's GAS-LIGHT (1944), earning her first bid for an Academy Award.

Martin Gottleib quotes the actress in Balancing Act: The Authorized Biography of Angela Lansbury (Little, Brown, 1999): "I really can't take credit for that performance . . . I have to credit Albert Lewin, and the cinematographer, the music, the role, and the art direction. I was framed in the most perfect way and I would like to be remembered for that part." Gottleib continues: "... Sybil Vane is a straight-forward part, offering few of the shadings that had been possible with GASLIGHT's Nancy. Nor was there a mentor like George Cukor behind the camera, encouraging her to dig deeply into the character that she was playing. And so she made THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY 'kind of walking through it in a daze." Since the performance is so very suc-

LEFT: He may be responsible for a rash of suicides, a killing, a blackmail scheme or two, but in the 1945 MGM film Dorian Gray is at least a gentleman, helping Gladys (Donna Reed), the niece of the murdered Basil Hallward, on with her necklace. RIGHT: It's the mod influence, perhaps, but in 1970 Dorian's idea of gentlemanly behavior is to close the stable door, lift the skirts of Patricia Ruxton (Isa Miranda), and do the dirty from the rear. As Dorian, Helmut Berger is obviously behind everything but the times.





cessful, and since Lansbury herself praises Lewin, Gottleib's remarks seem a disservice to both the actress and her talented director.

Lansbury has never forgotten THE PICTURE OF DOR-IAN GRAY. Hurd Hatfield was a guest on her TV series MURDER SHE WROTE, and the second-season episode "Sing a Song of Murder" featured Lansbury in a dual roleas Jessica Fletcher, of course, and as her British actress cousin, Emma MacGill. (Lansbury's mother, Moyna MacGill, plays a duchess in DORIAN GRAY.) As Emma, Lansbury sang "The Little Yellow Bird." (Later in the run, the character returned and Lansbury warbled Jerome Kern's "How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?," which she had performed in the 1946 MGM musical TILL THE CLOUDS ROLL BY.)

Despite the tawdry environment, Sybil muffles her innate sensuality under Victorian "nice girl" decorum. "The Little Yellow Bird" becomes the movie's theme song for victimization. The ditty tells of a wild sparrow, poor but proud (Sybil, naturally), attracted to a handsome vellow bird singing in a gilded cage (Dorian). Rather than join him in his luxurious prison, she decides to fly away alone, into the cold winter. She risks her life for freedom, by rejecting the fancy little songbird.

Sybil is already vulnerable to the romanticism that will destroy her. On the wall of her dressing room hangs a print of a knight, Sir Tristan. She gives this nickname to Dorian after their first meeting. (This is a necessary plot contrivance, since it's essential that Sybil's brother not know Dorian's real name. In the novel, however, the nickname is Prince Charming.) Lacking education, does Sybil know the Celtic love tragedy, or does she simply see Tristan as a knight in shining armor? The latter, most likely—though there's little doubt that Albert Lewin knew the story.

The legend tells of Tristan, who is sent by his uncle, King Mark, to escort Mark's bride-to-be, Isolde, to the wedding. Tristan and Isolde have a history: they had fallen in love when she tended his battle wounds, and Tristan had already fought and killed another knight betrothed to Isolde. Rather than marry Mark, Isolde drinks what she believes is poison, though it's really a love potion concocted by her servant. Isolde and Tristan renew their passion. A spy warns the King and then fights Tristan, who dies in Isolde's arms. Mark forgives Isolde, but she doesn't know it. Isolde's castle goes to war against Mark's army. She drops dead of a broken heart and falls across Tristan's body.

Appropriately, Stothart incorporates several snippets from Richard Wagner's 19th-century operas TRISTAN and FAUST-the latter about a man who sells his soul to the Devil-into his background music for THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY.

After hours, Dorian impresses Sybil and stirs her passions by playing the stormy Chopin Prelude in D Minor on the piano in the Two Turtles. Sybil's obsessively protective brother, James (Richard Fraser), finds this music morbidly disturbing and takes an instant dislike to the musician, though he's not even close enough to see his face. Giving Sybil a suggestive look, Dorian tells her that the music is called "Prelude," just before he kisses her for the first time. She thinks it's a Prelude to Happily Ever After, but those familiar with the plot of Wilde's novel know it's really a prelude to tragedy.

Dorian claims Chopin wrote the Prelude for George Sand and that Chopin was unhappy, "perhaps because he felt his youth slipping away from him." That's a fanciful speculation, though Chopin did start the affair with George Sand in 1831, the year he wrote this Prelude. A former child prodigy pianist, Chopin died at age 39. His life span was similar to Dorian Gray's and he wrote the first draft of the Prelude at about the age of Dorian when Sybil first hears him play it. It's possible to make too much of such parallels-Dorian obviously isn't meant to be a reincarnation of Chopin!-but it's worth noting that Chopin, when he died, also looked young for his age.

MGM's Dorian Grav is an unusually accomplished amateur pianist, in contrast with the male bimbo Dorian more common to adaptations. Nobody can play as well as Dorian does without a work ethic and considerable self-discipline: hour after hour, year after year of serious study. Although a professional pianist, Lela Simone, plays on the soundtrack, Hurd Hatfield looks completely credible in wide shots, where his face, hands, and the keyboard all show in the frame. The fact that Hatfield's Dorian isn't just a spoiled, rich, useless dilettante makes him more interesting and his downfall more poignant.

The Prelude is curiously appropriate as a signature

tune for Dorian Gray, because some pianists nickname this piece "the Dorian Prelude." That's because D minor is one of a few modern key signatures that represent near-survivals of a medieval tuning system known as modes. D minor is very similar to the old Dorian mode.

Chopin arranged his 24 Preludes of Opus 28 in the traditional order of the modern building blocks of music. He followed an old tradition of perceiving this order as a metaphor for a human being's passage through life, from birth to death. D minor is the last key signature in the series. Since music written in D minor often sounds ominous, somber, melancholy, or disturbing, musicians have flippantly given this key signature nicknames that can help explain how the music works in this movie: When Dorian Gray refuses to age gracefully toward Death Minor, he commits Destruction Minor, upsetting the natural order of the scales of life. To stay young forever, he sells his soul to Devil Minor and Doom Minors himself to Damnation Minor. Chopin's difficult "Dorian Prelude" sets the right mood, a violent dance of death in 6/8 time, ending in three solitary bass notes that sound like the tolling of a funeral bell. After the last notes, Chopin writes a symbol in the music that tells the pianist to sit silently for a long pause. It's tempting to interpret this ending as the silence of the grave.

Preparing for a long sea voyage to Australia, James criticizes his mother (Lydia Bilbrook) for promoting his sister's "young dandy," and threatens to kill Dorian if ever he wrongs Sybil. (Richard Fraser's performance gives James a suggestion of unwholesome, incestuous jealousy.)

Meanwhile, the smitten Dorian buys his beloved Sybil a caged canary, an unpleasant reminder of the trapped "Little Yellow Bird," echoed again when Dorian goes to luncheon at the home of Lady Agatha (Mary Forbes), Henry's aunt-who treats her guests to a gruesome pile of quail, served whole. Cinematographer Harry Stradling, Sr. photographs this delicacy to look like a heap of pitiful, burnt corpses. (Stradling won the movie's only Oscar, for Best Cinematography, Black and White.)

After the luncheon, Dorian tells Henry that he's engaged to Sybil. Henry suggests that, if Sybil loves Dorian, he can have his way with her without resorting to marriage. Henry recommends inviting her home to see the portrait and then pressuring her to spend the night. Dorian calls Henry a cad. When Sybil comes in from backstage to sit with them at the table in the pub, it's Helpful Henry who makes the suggestion that Sybil see Dorian's portrait.

Dorian takes Sybil home with him. He plays the disturbing D Minor Prelude for her again, in front of the picture. Sybil says that she will always remember Dorian's





LEFT: Albert Lewin turned Wilde's Shakespearean actress into a music hall singer when he cast Angela Lansbury as Sybil Vane for the 1945 film. Here, Malvolio Jones (Billy Bevan) presents Sybil to Dorian (Hurd Hatfield). RIGHT: In this 1963 stage production, Lady Wotton (Ricki Olshan) has her hand kissed by Dorian (T.J. Escott) as Lord Henry Wotton (Jay Robinson), more interested in the young man than his wife, watches with smug superiority.

may die.") Turtles symbolize long life in Asian mythology, but here a huge, dead turtle hangs from the ceiling as a decoration. A big, cartoonish sign near the entrance advertises "Dr. Look," with a painting of a disembodied, Cyclopean eye—resembling J. R. R. Tolkien's later Eye of Sauron!—that seems to stare at the patrons. (Eyes, mirrors, and—obviously—portraits appear a lot in this movie: image and perception versus reality.) So detailed were DORIAN GRAY's slums that they reappeared, in glorious Technicolor, in the dazzling "Limehouse Blues" number of Vincente Minnelli's ZIEGFELD FOLLIES (1946).

Inside the noisy den, Dorian finds a vulgar marionette show in progress. Among the working-class patrons, the beautiful young man looks conspicuous in his immaculate top hat and cape. Proprietor Malvolio Jones (Billy Bevan as a Cockney, not the Jewish caricature of Wilde's story) calls attention to "a gentleman" by obsequiously giving Dorian a seat at the front table. Then Sybil Vane comes onstage—as a music hall singer, not the Shakespearean tragedienne of the novel. As she sings "The Little Yellow Bird," Dorian gazes at her with a besotted expression strikingly similar to the one that appeared on his face when he fell in love with himself.

As the audience joins in the chorus, Sybil notices Dorian—and it's love at first sight.

Angela Lansbury is heartbreakingly sweet and vulnerable as Sybil Vane, a role that earned her a Golden Globe Award as Best Supporting Actress. She also received an Oscar nomination. This was her second film role at MGM, and Sybil's purity proved her versatility, since she had just played the sluttish Cockney maid in George Cukor's GAS-LIGHT (1944), earning her first bid for an Academy Award.

Martin Gottleib quotes the actress in Balancing Act: The Authorized Biography of Angela Lansbury (Little, Brown, 1999): "I really can't take credit for that performance . . . I have to credit Albert Lewin, and the cinematographer, the music, the role, and the art direction. I was framed in the most perfect way and I would like to be remembered for that part." Gottleib continues: ". . . Sybil Vane is a straight-forward part, offering few of the shadings that had been possible with GASLIGHT's Nancy. Nor was there a mentor like George Cukor behind the camera, encouraging her to dig deeply into the character that she was playing. And so she made THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY 'kind of walking through it in a daze.'" Since the performance is so very suc-

LEFT: He may be responsible for a rash of suicides, a killing, a blackmail scheme or two, but in the 1945 MGM film Dorian Gray is at least a gentleman, helping Gladys (Donna Reed), the niece of the murdered Basil Hallward, on with her necklace. RIGHT: It's the mod influence, perhaps, but in 1970 Dorian's idea of gentlemanly behavior is to close the stable door, lift the skirts of Patricia Ruxton (Isa Miranda), and do the dirty from the rear. As Dorian, Helmut Berger is obviously behind everything but the times.





cessful, and since Lansbury herself praises Lewin, Gottleib's remarks seem a disservice to both the actress and her talented director.

Lansbury has never forgotten THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. Hurd Hatfield was a guest on her TV series MURDER SHE WROTE, and the second-season episode "Sing a Song of Murder" featured Lansbury in a dual role—as Jessica Fletcher, of course, and as her British actress cousin, Emma MacGill. (Lansbury's mother, Moyna MacGill, plays a duchess in DORIAN GRAY.) As Emma, Lansbury sang "The Little Yellow Bird." (Later in the run, the character returned and Lansbury warbled Jerome Kern's "How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?," which she had performed in the 1946 MGM musical TILL THE CLOUDS ROLL BY.)

Despite the tawdry environment, Sybil muffles her innate sensuality under Victorian "nice girl" decorum. "The Little Yellow Bird" becomes the movie's theme song for victimization. The ditty tells of a wild sparrow, poor but proud (Sybil, naturally), attracted to a handsome yellow bird singing in a gilded cage (Dorian). Rather than join him in his luxurious prison, she decides to fly away alone, into the cold winter. She risks her life for freedom, by rejecting the

fancy little songbird.

Sybil is already vulnerable to the romanticism that will destroy her. On the wall of her dressing room hangs a print of a knight, Sir Tristan. She gives this nickname to Dorian after their first meeting. (This is a necessary plot contrivance, since it's essential that Sybil's brother not know Dorian's real name. In the novel, however, the nickname is Prince Charming.) Lacking education, does Sybil know the Celtic love tragedy, or does she simply see Tristan as a knight in shining armor? The latter, most likely—though there's little doubt that Albert Lewin knew the story.

The legend tells of Tristan, who is sent by his uncle, King Mark, to escort Mark's bride-to-be, Isolde, to the wedding. Tristan and Isolde have a history: they had fallen in love when she tended his battle wounds, and Tristan had already fought and killed another knight betrothed to Isolde. Rather than marry Mark, Isolde drinks what she believes is poison, though it's really a love potion concocted by her servant. Isolde and Tristan renew their passion. A spy warns the King and then fights Tristan, who dies in Isolde's arms. Mark forgives Isolde, but she doesn't know it. Isolde's castle goes to war against Mark's army. She drops dead of a broken heart and falls across Tristan's body.

Appropriately, Stothart incorporates several snippets from Richard Wagner's 19th-century operas TRISTAN and FAUST—the latter about a man who sells his soul to the Devil—into his background music for THE PICTURE OF

DORIAN GRAY.

lude to tragedy

After hours, Dorian impresses Sybil and stirs her passions by playing the stormy Chopin Prelude in D Minor on the piano in the Two Turtles. Sybil's obsessively protective brother, James (Richard Fraser), finds this music morbidly disturbing and takes an instant dislike to the musician, though he's not even close enough to see his face. Giving Sybil a suggestive look, Dorian tells her that the music is called "Prelude," just before he kisses her for the first time. She thinks it's a Prelude to Happily Ever After, but those familiar with the plot of Wilde's novel know it's really a pre-

Dorian claims Chopin wrote the Prelude for George Sand and that Chopin was unhappy, "perhaps because he felt his youth slipping away from him." That's a fanciful speculation, though Chopin did start the affair with George Sand in 1831, the year he wrote this Prelude. A former child prodigy pianist, Chopin died at age 39. His life span was similar to Dorian Gray's and he wrote the first draft of the Prelude at about the age of Dorian when Sybil first hears him play it. It's possible to make too much of such parallels—Dorian obviously isn't meant to be a reincarnation of Chopin!—but it's worth noting that Chopin, when he died, also looked young for his age.

MGM's Dorian Gray is an unusually accomplished amateur pianist, in contrast with the male bimbo Dorian more common to adaptations. Nobody can play as well as Dorian does without a work ethic and considerable self-discipline: hour after hour, year after year of serious study. Although a professional pianist, Lela Simone, plays on the soundtrack, Hurd Hatfield looks completely credible in wide shots, where his face, hands, and the keyboard all show in the frame. The fact that Hatfield's Dorian isn't just a spoiled, rich, useless dilettante makes him more interesting and his downfall more poignant.

The Prelude is curiously appropriate as a signature

tune for Dorian Gray, because some pianists nickname this piece "the Dorian Prelude." That's because D minor is one of a few modern key signatures that represent near-survivals of a medieval tuning system known as modes. D minor is represented by the old Dorian mode.

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Chopin arranged his 24 Preludes of Opus 28 in the traditional order of the modern building blocks of music. He followed an old tradition of perceiving this order as a metaphor for a human being's passage through life, from birth to death. D minor is the last key signature in the series. Since music written in D minor often sounds ominous, somber, melancholy, or disturbing, musicians have flippantly given this key signature nicknames that can help explain how the music works in this movie: When Dorian Gray refuses to age gracefully toward Death Minor, he commits Destruction Minor, upsetting the natural order of the scales of life. To stay young forever, he sells his soul to Devil Minor and Doom Minors himself to Damnation Minor. Chopin's difficult "Dorian Prelude" sets the right mood, a violent dance of death in 6/8 time, ending in three solitary bass notes that sound like the tolling of a funeral bell. After the last notes, Chopin writes a symbol in the music that tells the pianist to sit silently for a long pause. It's tempting to interpret this ending as the silence of the grave.

Preparing for a long sea voyage to Australia, James criticizes his mother (Lydia Bilbrook) for promoting his sister's "young dandy," and threatens to kill Dorian if ever he wrongs Sybil. (Richard Fraser's performance gives James a suggestion of unwholesome, incestuous jealousy.)

Meanwhile, the smitten Dorian buys his beloved Sybil a caged canary, an unpleasant reminder of the trapped "Little Yellow Bird," echoed again when Dorian goes to luncheon at the home of Lady Agatha (Mary Forbes), Henry's aunt—who treats her guests to a gruesome pile of quail, served whole. Cinematographer Harry Stradling, Sr. photographs this delicacy to look like a heap of pitiful, burnt corpses. (Stradling won the movie's only Oscar, for Best Cinematography, Black and White.)

After the luncheon, Dorian tells Henry that he's engaged to Sybil. Henry suggests that, if Sybil loves Dorian, he can have his way with her without resorting to marriage. Henry recommends inviting her home to see the portrait and then pressuring her to spend the night. Dorian calls Henry a cad. When Sybil comes in from backstage to sit with them at the table in the pub, it's Helpful Henry who makes the suggestion that Sybil see Dorian's portrait.

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Seemingly, it is the Chopin Prelude that lures Sybil back. Though the lighting hasn't changed in the few moments since her departure, now her shadow looms long and black as it precedes her into the room. An orchestrated version of the Prelude accompanies this film noir moment. Trumpets join the tolling bell effect of the last three notes, with a clock visible in the background. (The temptation to find symbolic meaning-shadow of death, tolling of funeral bells, time running out, trumpet call of judgment-is irresistible.) Both Sybil and Dorian seal their fate with their actions in this scene. Neither ever succeeds in reversing the fall to damnation.

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The portrait (again in black-and-white) looks on impassively, if not entirely unchangingly, at the death of its creator. The wooden framing on the closed door of the nursery forms another large, white sign of the cross. Dorian's face remains blank, impassive, trancelike,



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The second time Dorian visits his nursery, checking the effects of his debauchery on the picture, the blocks are the same. However, the third time, when Dorian murders Basil, they change. Basil's dead hand brushes across two blocks, one with a B on it (for Basil) and another with a plus sign. Basil has been "added" to the list of victims, but the plus also looks like a cross, mirroring several other signs of the cross in this scene. These two blocks sit in front of a rubber ball with five-sided stars on it-pentacles, evoking the occult themes of the movie. On top of a blackboard, a big block with another cryptic number lies on its side. It's such an odd place for a block, and it's photographed so prominently, that it's clearly there for a reason. Either a 6 or a 9, the ambiguous position suggests it means both. Maybe it's the signature of Stradling, the cinematographer, since his name has nine letters and Dorian has six; or it could stand for Stradling and Berman (Pandro Berman, the producer).

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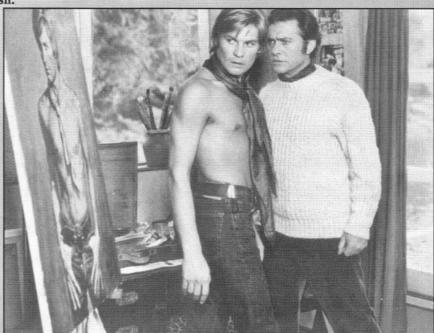
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Sex O'Peel Roy Dean Remembers David Peel

by Richard Valley

n the fifties and sixties, Hammer Films left virtually no Victorian stone unturned in their quest for suitable film fodder, producing such landmark pictures as HORROR OF DRACULA (1958), THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (1959), THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL (1960), and SHI (1955). SHE (1965). It's something of a mystery, then, that the famed Studio That Dripped Blood seemed never to turn to Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray for source material, especially since, at least twice, Hammer had actors in their employ who perfectly em-bodied the novel's leading character— Shane Briant in the early seventies and, before him, David Peel. Actually, a film of Wilde's novel had been on Hammer's

schedule, on two separate occasions. It was cancelled the

first time due

to remarks

made by John

of Britain's

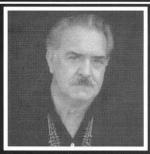
Trevelyan, the chief examiner

censorship board, who broadly hinted that the sexual shenanigans displayed in THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL wouldn't be countenanced for THE PIC-TURE OF DORIAN GRAY. In 1972, with COUNTESS DRACULA in production, a film version of Wilde's novel was an-nounced by Hammer's Michael Carreras, but again was mysteriously dropped. In A History of Horror (Scarecrow, 1996), Denis Meikle claims that this was the re-Denis Meikle claims that this was the re-sult of independent producer Harry Alan Towers already having an adaptation in progress—but Towers' film, starring Hel-mut Berger, was released in 1970, two years before COUNTESS DRACULA. Whatever the reasons for the cancellations, it's telling that Hammer's two tries at Dorian coincided with the employment of Briant and Peel.
David Peel achieved film immortality
with a single role, Baron Meinster in THE

BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960), and re-mains something of a mystery himself. So little is known about the man that each new tidbit of information-that he acted with BRIDES costar Peter Cush-ing in a 1954 television production of the Anatole de Grunwald classic the Anatole de Grunwald classic BEAU BRUMMELL, that he appeared opposite J. Carrol Naish in an episode of the syndicated TV series THE NEW ADVENTURES OF CHARLIE CHAN (1957)—achieves a significance all out of proportion to its importance. However, it was a matter of con-siderable importance to learn from Scarlet Scribe Dav-

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THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

Continued from page 59

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Sex O'Peel Roy Dean Remembers David Peel

by Richard Valley

n the fifties and sixties, Hammer Films left virtually no Victorian stone unturned in their quest for suitable film fodder, producing such landmark pictures as HORROR OF DRAC-ULA (1958), THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (1959), THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL (1960), and SHE (1965). It's something of a mystery, then, that the famed Studio That Dripped Blood seemed never to turn to Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray for source material, especially since, at least twice, Hammer had actors in their employ who perfectly em-bodied the novel's leading character— Shane Briant in the early seventies and, before him, David Peel.

Actually, a film of Wilde's novel had been on Hammer's

schedule, on two separate occasions. It was cancelled the first time due to remarks made by John Trevelyan, the chief examiner of Britain's

censorship board, who broadly hinted that the sexual shenanigans displayed in THE TWO FACES OF DR. JEKYLL wouldn't be countenanced for THE PIC-TURE OF DORIAN GRAY. In 1972, with COUNTESS DRACULA in production, a film version of Wilde's novel was announced by Hammer's Michael Carreras, but again was mysteriously dropped. In A History of Horror (Scarecrow, 1996), Denis Meikle claims that this was the result of independent producer Harry Alan Towers already having an adaptation in progress—but Towers' film, starring Helmut Berger, was released in 1970, two years before COUNTESS DRACULA. Whatever the reasons for the cancellations, it's telling that Hammer's two tries at Dorian coincided with the employment of Briant and Peel.

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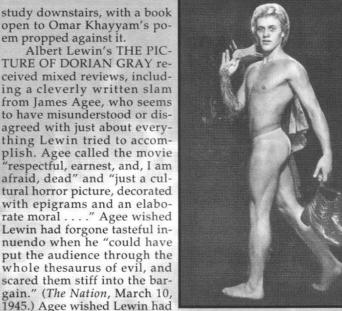
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Double Exposed Dennis Wayne Dances Dorian

Interview by Jessie Lilley Text by Richard Valley

n 1972, The Picture of Dorian Gray underwent another startling trans-formation—it became The Photograph of Dorian Gray, when New York's Joffrey Ballet premiered a new work cho-reographed and directed by Joe Lay-ton—DOUBLE EXPOSURE. Layton had made his name in musical theater with such shows as TENDERLOIN (1960), GEORGE M (1968), and DEAR WORLD (1969), before deciding to tackle ballet.

The photograph—one original and four copies, air-brushed through four progressively grim transformationswas the work of actor/photographer Cris Alexander, himself well known to theater buffs for his roles in the origi-nal productions of ON THE TOWN

(1944, in which he played Chip, the part taken by Frank Sinatra in the 1949 film) and WONDERFUL TOWN (1953). The photographs were mounted in a plexi-glass cube, which was periodically shifted from one picture to the next to show the deterioration of its subject.

After Dark, the semicloseted precursor to such modern gay-oriented magazines as *The Advocate*, ran an interview with Layton in their March 1972 issue, in which Layton explained to writer Jack Anderson that he wanted to put the Oscar wilde classic in modern dress because he found it "oddly akin" to the times. "When Dorian destroys himself, what does he get involved with? Drugs and black magic. That may be 1890, but it's also very today."

The title DOUBLE EXPOSURE re-

ferred, naturally, to Dorian's double life as man and doppelganger picture, and pointed to the ballet's substitution of a

photo for a painting. More obliquely, it also referred to the dancers, since DOUBLE EXPO-SURE had two separate casts, each taking its turn. One company was headed by Dermot Burke as Dorian, the other by Dennis Wayne (pictured below at a rehearsal for DOUBLE EXPOSURE, and above in a photograph for the pictorial study The Creation of Man).

Wayne began his career as a child during the last dying gasps of vaudeville, performing with his parents and a brother and sister as Taffy 'n' Terry and Trio: Adagio Equilibrists. Before dancing with Robert Joffrey's company, he per-formed with the Harkness. Post-Joffrey, he made a brief appearance in the movie SUMMER WISHES WINTER DREAMS, playing the lover Ron Richards (Joanne Wood-ward and Martin Balsam played Richards' parents), then formed his own company—called, simply, Dancers. (Woodward and her hus-band, Paul Newman, helped fund the company.)

Dennis Wayne spoke to Scarlet Street several years ago about the experience of creating a dancing Dorian, which began, after he was cast, with reading Wilde's novel.

"I was aware of the book, of course, but I'd never read it. I did read it, then, because the more knowledge you have of the origi-nal, the better your characterization. When I danced Billy the Kid, I a gay relationship with a character looked into his character, too. I found that Dorian's obsession with



ton was the director and choreogra pher; it was his interpretation, but he tried to stick to Wilde as much as possible, while modernizing the details. We smoked grass, we got into drugs, we got hooked. They've been smoking grass since the sixteenth century—I'm aware of that—but the story was up-dated. It was really very much a seven-

"In the very beginning, when Dorian made his first entrance in the ballet, he's sort of naive, but he's also wearing tight pants and a tight shirt. He's jail bait. I just went with the flow of the character. The way the ballet was structured, the relationships of the people—I just let the choreography speak for itself and tried to be as good dramatically with the text."

DOUBLE EXPOSURE's score was a

mixed bag. It featured the Nocturne in D-flat major, Op. 9, No. 2, by Alexander Scriabin, coupled with electronic music. Some parts of the ballet were danced without any music at all. It was Joe Layton's premiere with the Joffrey and received a tremendous amount of publicity. Wayne remembered the experience as something of a circus, in which he was the center-ring attraction. For all its almost instant no-toriety, though, the ballet was-for the times-surprisingly modest in certain

respects.
"There was no nudity," Wayne re-membered. "In fact, on opening night at the City Center, I was walking down the stairs and my pants ripped in the crotch. Bob Joffrey said, 'Leave them that way; it's good!' I said, 'No way, Jose!' I can tell you that every gay man in New York who could get into the theater was there. Sold Out! Packed! I theater was there. Sold Out! Packed! I remember somebody in the audience whistling at me and I got so pissed off. I wanted to yell out, "Why did you do that?" I felt like an object. I felt like a hooker, like one of these guys down by the leather bars on Christopher Street."

Dorian's own versatile sexuality

was not ignored in the production. Dorian had relationships with anybody and anything. He was promiscuous and an easy, easy target. There was

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THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

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Brett's obituary was published in The Times on September 14, 1995, it was accompanied by a photograph not of the actor as Sherlock Holmes, the role in which, due to age and severe illness, he had grown lined, bloated, and spent, but as the hauntingly beautiful Dorian Gray.

December 6, 1961 brought an American TV video version produced by David Susskind for BRECHT GOLDEN SHOWCASE. It was directed by Paul Bogart and starred George C. Scott as Lord Henry Wotton (with the same pseudo-British accent he used in 1963's THE LIST OF ADRIAN MESSENGER); Susan Oliver as both Sybil Vane and Hetty, a gardener's daughter on the Grav estate who becomes Dorian's love interest; Louis Hayward as Basil Hallward: Carrie Nye as Lady Henry Wotton: Norman Bowler as Alan Campbell; Robert Walker, looking like his late-movie star dad but sounding somewhat less butch than the show's main character, as James Vane; and, as Dorian himself, a relative newcomer named John Fraser. Repeating from the 1945 film was a familiar voice: Sir Cedric Hardwicke, narrating as before. Also featured in a minor role was future TV vampire Jonathan Frid, who would later play a part in a story arc inspired by the Wilde original on the Gothic soap DARK SHADOWS.

Considering the constraints imposed by time and the CBS censor, this PICTURE is quite respectable, if lacking a certain vitality. At this point in his career, Scott hasn't the fine touch necessary to make Wilde's witticisms sparkle. (Nye does much better in her short scene as Lord Henry's wife.) Hayward delivers as Basil, but Oliver, with two chances, doesn't register strongly as either of her characters. In the lead, Fraser at first seems little more than a standard juvenile, more Freddy Eynsford-Hill than Dorian Gray, but he grows in the role in direction proportion to the growth in Dorian's ego-hardly surprising, since, just a year earlier, he'd played egomaniacal Lord Alfred Douglas in THE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE (1960), When Dorian learns of Sybil's death, Fraser makes him genuinely shaken and remorseful. He still goes to the opera with Lord Henry, but doesn't come to the decision to do so quite so easily.

In 1965, Fraser impersonated yet another eminent Victorian-Jack the Ripper-in A STUDY IN TERROR, opposite the Sherlock Holmes of John Neville. It was the War of the Bosies; in 1960, the same year in which Fraser took on the role, Neville had also played Lord Alfred, in the film

Contemporary views of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY were mostly tepid. Wrote Jack Gould in The New York Times (December 7, 1961): "The play was only a rough sketch, never a portrait . . . the performances of last night's company seemed disconcertingly superficial . . . As Dorian Gray, John Fraser seemed impervious to the part's deeper implications. George C. Scott, as Lord Henry who speaks the cynical epigrams of Wilde, did not have control of the suave hedonism that is so vital."

In Variety (December 13, 1961) "Horo" suggested that the fault lay not with the stars, but the creator: The eerie PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY was carried off with flair and polish in this video version of the Oscar Wilde classic. It had flourishes of excitement, rumbles, ever so civilized, of man's hedonistic corruption, portrayed with style and insight. That the hour drama . . . proved less than a theatrical adventure lies in the nature of the property. Oscar Wilde's conceit, on which the whole drama is based, now is quite an old hat . . . John Fraser as Dorian Gray brought a physical handsomeness to his role and, for the most part, suggested the corruption in his soul . . . George C. Scott proved to be an engaging villain . . . Louis Hayward was effective as the artist and Susan Oliver was comely and winning in her two roles."

Proving that the subtleties of prejudice hadn't changed much in the 61 years since Wilde's death, and preaching a

boob-tube morality that persists to this day, Harriet Van Horne wrote in The New York World Telegram and Sun (December 7, 1961): "It is just as well that the FAMILY CLAS-SICS series changed its name to the GOLDEN SHOWCASE before the producers got around to last night's jolly little classic, THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. With all due respect to the artistry of Oscar Wilde-and he was a fine artist, whatever one feels about his deviations-it is difficult to envisage DORIAN GRAY as an hour of togetherness for the family . . . We meet Dorian (John Fraser) sitting for his portrait at the height of his golden youth. "A young Adonis made of ivory and rose leaves." Wilde describes him, a



metaphor that always strikes me as having omitted a few ingredients . . . Lord Henry is effete, degenerate, and horribly garrulous . . . You might even get the notion that Lord Henry and Dorian avoided the company of the ladies. The family classic approach sidesteps that sort of problem, you

may be sure

Despite Van Horne's reassurances, Susskind's production carried several hints of "the love that dare not speak its name," in Basil's familiarity in attempting to take Dorian by the arm (a gesture Dorian tellingly repeats with Alan Campbell), in the unspoken sin by which Dorian blackmails Alan, and in a somewhat startling scene late in the drama, in which an aging Lord Henry, cackling like the dissipated marques in CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (1961), sidles up behind Dorian (who is, naturally, looking at himself in a mirror) and gently, tentatively places his hands on the vounger man's shoulders.

Much of the criticism of the show was leveled at its more terrifying elements, the very reason many horror buffs-even those who never actually saw it-remember the program to this day.

"This is the face of a monster," cries Basil when he sees the grotesquery that was once his masterpiece.

'It is the face of my soul," replies Dorian.

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Double Exposed Dennis Wayne Dances Dorian

Interview by Jessie Lilley Text by Richard Valley

n 1972, The Picture of Dorian Gray underwent another startling transformation—it became The Photograph of Dorian Gray, when New York's Joffrey Ballet premiered a new work choreographed and directed by Joe Layton—DOUBLE EXPOSURE. Layton had made his name in musical theater with such shows as TENDERLOIN (1960), GEORGE M (1968), and DEAR WORLD (1969), before deciding to tackle ballet.

The photograph—one original and four copies, air-brushed through four progressively grim transformations—was the work of actor/photographer Cris Alexander, himself well known to theater buffs for his roles in the original productions of ON THE TOWN

(1944, in which he played Chip, the part taken by Frank Sinatra in the 1949 film) and WONDERFUL TOWN (1953). The photographs were mounted in a plexiglass cube, which was periodically shifted from one picture to the next to show the deterioration of its subject.

After Dark, the semicloseted precursor to such modern gay-oriented magazines as The Advocate, ran an interview with Layton in their March 1972 issue, in which Layton explained to writer Jack Anderson that he wanted to put the Oscar Wilde classic in modern dress because he found it "oddly akin" to the times. "When Dorian destroys himself, what does he get involved with? Drugs and black magic. That may be 1890, but it's also very today."

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The title DOUBLE EXPOSURE referred, naturally, to Dorian's double life as man and doppelganger picture, and pointed to the ballet's substitution of a

photo for a painting. More obliquely, it also referred to the dancers, since DOUBLE EXPOSURE had two separate casts, each taking its turn. One company was headed by Dermot Burke as Dorian, the other by Dennis Wayne (pictured below at a rehearsal for DOUBLE EXPOSURE, and above in a photograph for the pictorial study The Creation of Man).

Wayne began his career as a

Wayne began his career as a child during the last dying gasps of vaudeville, performing with his parents and a brother and sister as Taffy 'n' Terry and Trio: Adagio Equilibrists. Before dancing with Robert Joffrey's company, he performed with the Harkness. Post-Joffrey, he made a brief appearance in the movie SUMMER WISHES WINTER DREAMS, playing the lover Ron Richards (Joanne Woodward and Martin Balsam played Richards' parents), then formed his own company—called, simply, Dancers. (Woodward and her husband, Paul Newman, helped fund the company.)

Dennis Wayne spoke to Scarlet

Dennis Wayne spoke to Scarlet Street several years ago about the experience of creating a dancing Dorian, which began, after he was cast, with reading Wilde's novel.

"I was aware of the book, of

"I was aware of the book, of course, but I'd never read it. I did read it, then, because the more knowledge you have of the original, the better your characterization. When I danced Billy the Kid, I looked into his character, too. I found that Dorian's obsession with



his own beauty corrupted him. Joe Layton was the director and choreographer; it was his interpretation, but he tried to stick to Wilde as much as possible, while modernizing the details. We smoked grass, we got into drugs, we got hooked. They've been smoking grass since the sixteenth century—I'm aware of that—but the story was updated. It was really very much a seventies work.

"In the very beginning, when Dorian made his first entrance in the ballet, he's sort of naive, but he's also wearing tight pants and a tight shirt. He's jail bait. I just went with the flow of the character. The way the ballet was structured, the relationships of the people—I just let the choreography speak for itself and tried to be as good dramatically with the text."

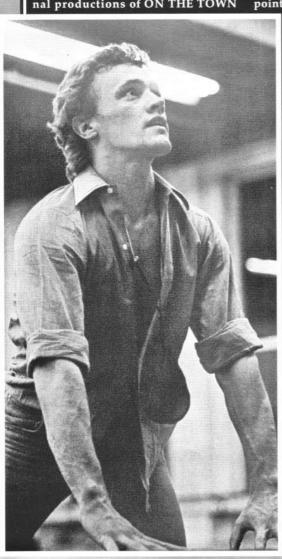
dramatically with the text."

DOUBLE EXPOSURE's score was a mixed bag. It featured the Nocturne in D-flat major, Op. 9, No. 2, by Alexander Scriabin, coupled with electronic music. Some parts of the ballet were danced without any music at all. It was Joe Layton's premiere with the Joffrey and received a tremendous amount of publicity. Wayne remembered the experience as something of a circus, in which he was the center-ring attraction. For all its almost instant notoriety, though, the ballet was—for the times—surprisingly modest in certain respects.

"There was no nudity," Wayne remembered. "In fact, on opening night at the City Center, I was walking down the stairs and my pants ripped in the crotch. Bob Joffrey said, 'Leave them that way; it's good!' I said, 'No way, Jose!' I can tell you that every gay man in New York who could get into the theater was there. Sold Out! Packed! I remember somebody in the audience whistling at me and I got so pissed off. I wanted to yell out, "Why did you do that?" I felt like an object. I felt like a hooker, like one of these guys down by the leather bars on Christopher Street."

Dorian's own versatile sexuality was not ignored in the production. "Dorian had relationships with anybody and anything. He was promiscuous and an easy, easy target. There was a gay relationship with a character

you have of the origitter your characteriza-I danced Billy the Kid, I a gay relationship with a cha



THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

Continued from page 61

Brett's obituary was published in The Times on September 14, 1995, it was accompanied by a photograph not of the actor as Sherlock Holmes, the role in which, due to age and severe illness, he had grown lined, bloated, and spent, but

as the hauntingly beautiful Dorian Gray.

December 6, 1961 brought an American TV video version produced by David Susskind for BRECHT GOLDEN SHOWCASE. It was directed by Paul Bogart and starred George C. Scott as Lord Henry Wotton (with the same pseudo-British accent he used in 1963's THE LIST OF ADRIAN MESSENGER); Susan Oliver as both Sybil Vane and Hetty, a gardener's daughter on the Gray estate who becomes Dorian's love interest; Louis Hayward as Basil Hallward; Carrie Nye as Lady Henry Wotton; Norman Bowler as Alan Campbell; Robert Walker, looking like his late-movie star dad but sounding somewhat less butch than the show's main character, as James Vane; and, as Dorian himself, a relative newcomer named John Fraser. Repeating from the 1945 film was a familiar voice: Sir Cedric Hardwicke, narrating as before. Also featured in a minor role was future TV vampire Jonathan Frid, who would later play a part in a story arc inspired by the Wilde original on the Gothic soap DARK SHADOWS

Considering the constraints imposed by time and the CBS censor, this PICTURE is quite respectable, if lacking a certain vitality. At this point in his career, Scott hasn't the fine touch necessary to make Wilde's witticisms sparkle. (Nye does much better in her short scene as Lord Henry's wife.) Hayward delivers as Basil, but Oliver, with two chances, doesn't register strongly as either of her characters. In the lead, Fraser at first seems little more than a standard juvenile, more Freddy Eynsford-Hill than Dorian Gray, but he grows in the role in direction proportion to the growth in Dorian's ego-hardly surprising, since, just a year earlier, he'd played egomaniacal Lord Alfred Douglas in THE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE (1960). When Dorian learns of Sybil's death, Fraser makes him genuinely shaken and remorseful. He still goes to the opera with Lord Henry, but doesn't come to the decision to do so quite so easily

In 1965, Fraser impersonated yet another eminent Victorian—Jack the Ripper—in A STUDY IN TERROR, opposite the Sherlock Holmes of John Neville. It was the War of the Bosies; in 1960, the same year in which Fraser took on the role, Neville had also played Lord Alfred, in the film

OSCAR WILDE.

Contemporary views of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY were mostly tepid. Wrote Jack Gould in The New York Times (December 7, 1961): "The play was only a rough sketch, never a portrait . . . the performances of last night's company seemed disconcertingly superficial . . . As Dorian Gray, John Fraser seemed impervious to the part's deeper implications. George C. Scott, as Lord Henry who speaks the cynical epigrams of Wilde, did not have control of the suave hedonism that is so vital.

In Variety (December 13, 1961) "Horo" suggested that the fault lay not with the stars, but the creator: The eerie PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY was carried off with flair and polish in this video version of the Oscar Wilde classic. It had flourishes of excitement, rumbles, ever so civilized, of man's hedonistic corruption, portrayed with style and insight. That the hour drama . . . proved less than a theatrical adventure lies in the nature of the property. Oscar Wilde's conceit, on which the whole drama is based, now is quite an old hat . . . John Fraser as Dorian Gray brought a physical handsomeness to his role and, for the most part, suggested the corruption in his soul . . . George C. Scott proved to be an engaging villain . . . Louis Hayward was effective as the artist and Susan Oliver was comely and winning in her two roles."

Proving that the subtleties of prejudice hadn't changed much in the 61 years since Wilde's death, and preaching a boob-tube morality that persists to this day, Harriet Van Horne wrote in The New York World Telegram and Sun (December 7, 1961): "It is just as well that the FAMILY CLAS-SICS series changed its name to the GOLDEN SHOWCASE before the producers got around to last night's jolly little classic, THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. With all due respect to the artistry of Oscar Wilde-and he was a fine artist, whatever one feels about his deviations—it is difficult to envisage DORIAN GRAY as an hour of togetherness for the family . . . We meet Dorian (John Fraser) sitting for his portrait at the height of his golden youth. "A young Adonis made of ivory and rose leaves," Wilde describes him, a



metaphor that always strikes me as having omitted a few ingredients . . . Lord Henry is effete, degenerate, and horribly garrulous . . . You might even get the notion that Lord Henry and Dorian avoided the company of the ladies. The family classic approach sidesteps that sort of problem, you

may be sure."

Despite Van Horne's reassurances, Susskind's production carried several hints of "the love that dare not speak its name," in Basil's familiarity in attempting to take Dorian by the arm (a gesture Dorian tellingly repeats with Alan Campbell), in the unspoken sin by which Dorian blackmails Alan, and in a somewhat startling scene late in the drama, in which an aging Lord Henry, cackling like the dissipated marques in CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF (1961), sidles up behind Dorian (who is, naturally, looking at himself in a mirror) and gently, tentatively places his hands on the younger man's shoulders.

Much of the criticism of the show was leveled at its more terrifying elements, the very reason many horror buffs—even those who never actually saw it—remember the

program to this day.
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LEFT AND RIGHT: The sexual revolution of the late sixties and early seventies allowed DORIAN GRAY director Massimano Dallamano to show what Oscar Wilde's novel and earlier film versions only hinted at—if they hinted at anything at all! Dorian (Helmut Berger) bedded Sybil Vane (Marie Liljedahl) in one of the film's frequent nude scenes, and the relationship between Dorian and Lord Henry Wotton (Herbert Lom) was overtly sexual. In his Scarlet Street interview last issue, Berger claimed he had to tone down some of Dallamano's more outre suggestions. BOTTOM LEFT: In the Dan Curtis telefilm, Shane Briant was a Dorian rarity—a genuine blonde!

"To be good, according to the vulgar standards of goodness, is obviously quite easy. It merely requires a certain amount of sordid terror, a certain lack of imaginative thought and a certain low passion for middle-class respectability."

-Oscar Wilde

In August, 1970, Commonwealth United Entertainment (distributed by AIP) released THE SECRET OF DORIAN GRAY, subtitled, "A modern allegory based on the work of Oscar Wilde." The campy, revisionist approach loosely follows the outline of Wilde's plot, but updates it to end in the last year of the Swingin' Sixties. The dialogue is looped, not very smoothly. It's obvious that some of the actors—including Helmut Berger, its sex-object star—don't speak their

lines in English. Commonwealth United had brought together Towers of London with Sargon Films of Italy and Terra Filmkunst of what was then West Germany, to collaborate on feature films released in English, Italian, and German versions. Guenter Ebert, Marcello Coscia, and Massimano Dallamano fashioned the screenplay for an international cast. Dallamano directed and Harry Alan Towers (best known for a series of Fu Manchu films starring Christopher Lee) produced. Though hardly a forgotten masterpiece, THE SECRET OF DORIAN GRAY (also known simply as DORIAN GRAY) deserves another look.

The movie begins with a closeup from the point of view of Dorian (Berger) as he washes his bloodied hands at a sink. "Spooky" music plays. In the mirror, the handsome young face looks haggard and guilt-stricken. Dorian lives in a fine old house, updated with modern conveniences. A broken vase lies on the floor in an upstairs room, where a black cat (the color of evil and bad luck, probably in deliberate homage to the statuette of Bast in the 1945 movie) watches Dorian tidy up. The fire in his fireplace dissolves to a long flashback sequence that continues nearly to the end of the movie.

THE SECRET hints at Dorian's secret right away, when he and two male friends go to a gay cabaret late at night. The three watch disapprovingly as a black female impersonator, Beau, performs a campy dance on top of the bar. Beau wears a bizarre dress, decorated all over with metallic tinsel foil fringe that resembles Christmas tree "icicles." Most of the patrons laugh and enjoy themselves, as Beau strips to a black bra and panties, then strips off the bra to much applause. Beau's starting to peel off the panties when Dorian and his two companions, too conventional for this sort of entertainment, walk out grimly.

At this point, Dorian seems pleasant enough-vapid and stupid, to be sure, but nothing worse. Alone, he stops on impulse at a Shakespearean theater, where he sees an ad for ROMEO AND JULIET, with Sybil Vane (Marie Liljedahl) as Juliet. Dark-haired Sybil looks young and vulnerable as she rehearses with a tape recorder, two days before her opening night. (The looped dialogue looks most obvious in this scene, since it's apparent that Marie Liljedahl doesn't speak her lines in English-a decided disadvantage for someone rehearsing Shakespeare.) The two get acquainted, wander around romantic London by night, eat supper together, and end up in Dorian's bed. A tape of ROMEO AND JULIET plays as they make love. (To Dorian's surprise, Sybil is a virgin.) Next morning, as Dorian kisses her goodbye at her apartment building in a lower middle class neighborhood, where she lives with her mother, a man watches them from a window.

Henry Wotton (Herbert Lom), a snooty art dealer, and his predatory bitch of a sister, Gwendolyn (Margaret Lee), meet Dorian for the first time when they visit Basil Hallward's pleasant seaside studio. Dorian poses shirtless, with



LEFT: Stage versions of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY continue to proliferate right into the 21st Century. The recent Irish Repertory Theatre starred Crispin Freeman as a decidedly bisexual Dorian. RIGHT: Makeup master Dick Smith created this dummy Dorian for the conclusion of the 1961 David Susskind TV production.

a long, blue scarf draped around his neck. Wearing blue jeans with a wide leather belt, he looks innocent and carefree, clowning around, making silly faces. At the same time, he's dressed like a male hooker. Basil (Richard Todd) certainly captures none of the innocence and all of the smol-

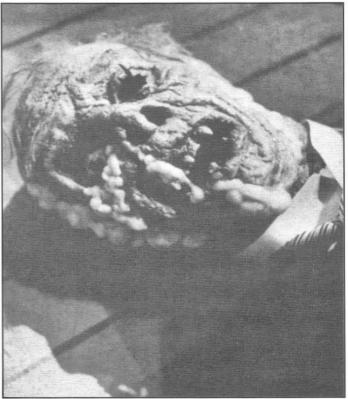
dering sex on his canvas.

Henry counsels Dorian in the virtues of hedonism: "What is vice, anyway? Simply pleasure without shame." Later, Gwendolyn—named, perhaps, for the sophisticated city girl of Wilde's THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST—watches Dorian hungrily as he uses Basil's outdoor shower. He's a babe magnet even before he makes his devil's bargain with the portrait. Henry teases Basil about his attraction to Dorian's portrait (by inference, Basil's attraction to Dorian himself). A hint of jealousy surfaces: When Henry can't hide his attraction, he deflects attention by making a big deal of Basil's own obsession. It takes one to know one.

Herbert Lom, best known as Chief Inspector Dreyfus in the Pink Panther films and to horror enthusiasts as Hammer's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1962), lends depth and complexity to Henry, whose cynicism looks like a self-protective pose. Henry wants to retain his own youth, but he's wise enough to know he can't do that. He falls in love with someone who quickly becomes too coldhearted to love him in return. Also, brains matter to Henry, and Dorian hasn't got any.

Dorian and Sybil drive to the country, where they romp and make love, after which she nudges him for a commitment. He agrees by calling her, "Mrs. Sybil Gray"—an ominous portent, because that would be the proper title for a widow, not a wife. (Formal address for a wife in formality-conscious England should be, "Mrs. Dorian Gray.")

When Basil finally finishes and signs the picture, Dorian, in a harsh tone unlike his usual lighthearted voice, complains, "Why should I get old while this stays young? Why can't it be the other way around?" Basil doesn't take this comment seriously, but Dorian goes on, "I would give my soul to stay like that." When the others realize he means it, even Henry looks worried. Basil is so alarmed that he picks up a knife and threatens to destroy the painting, but Dorian won't let him. Henry buys the picture as a gift for Dorian. After Dorian hangs up the portrait in his home, his narcissism increases and he begins neglecting his friends. His relationship with Sybil fails to hold his attention for much longer. She lives with her mother and her control-



ling, over- protective brother, Jim (Stewart Black). When Jim leaves on a sea voyage scheduled to last a year, Sybil tells Dorian, "I think he'd kill for me." Dorian remarks that the brother and sister act almost like lovers, rendering obvious the subtext of the 1945 film.

One night, Dorian, Basil, Henry, and Gwendolyn attend a formal party, hosted by Patricia Ruxton (Isa Miranda). She's a rich American who bought herself a stately old home in England and now dabbles in real estate and property development. Mrs. Ruxton (dressed in flaming red-orange chiffon, with a remarkably hideous hat) wants to buy Selby, Dorian's family home. After dinner, the decadent crowd accompanies Dorian to the theater, where Sybil and her Romeo put on a miserable performance. Henry reacts smugly while Dorian is mortified, as the audience talks during the play and some people walk out. Breaking character, Sybil looks directly at Dorian and smiles at him. To her dismay, he is not amused. During her death scene, in despair, she tries to genuinely stab herself.

In Dorian's red sports car later, Sybil laughs hysterically. She says, "To hell with the theater!" Because she loves Dorian, she no longer cares for her art. "When I saw you with those carnivorous women tonight, the theater finally died for me." Disgusted that she made a fool of him by performing unprofessionally in front of his friends, Dorian snaps, "You're a bourgeois, sentimental bore." Back at the awful Ruxton party, the women smirk at Sybil, who leaves in a huff. Dorian halfheartedly chases after her, but they fight again and he ends up in bed with Gwendolyn.

In the morning, Dorian notices the first signs of cruelty in his portrait. Dorian starts to suspect that the "unseen" world can influence the "seen" (mundane) world. He covers up the picture and sends a scraping of the paint to his chemist friend, Alan Campbell (Renato Romano), who analyses it and says it's perfectly ordinary. He sends Sybil a telegram asking her to forgive him and come back, but of course it's too late. Henry tells him that Sybil committed suicide by throwing herself into traffic.

Dorian's reaction to Sybil's death is more self-justifying than remorseful. He's not a tragic figure here, as he was in

Continued on page 73

Cocktails for Four David Del Valle toasts Author Hatfield, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Curtis Harrington

TURE OF DORIAN GRAY (1945). Subsequently, whenever his name would pop up in such films as the epic EL CID (1961) or the surrealistic MICKEY ONE (1965), Hatfield was always the center of my attention. There is one particular episode of ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS ("None Are So Blind") that permanently etched his persona in my memory. Hatfield portrays an outrageously vain and desperate young man whose fortunes depend on doing away with his wealthy aunt. He gives himself away to the authorities by refusing to acknowledge a large birthmark on the left side of his face, making any of his disguises point-

less. His vanity overwhelms his perfect crime. The teleplay became a metaphor for Hatfield's career as a whole. Regardless of his artistry and skill as a stage and screen actor, the birthmark created by Oscar Wilde's ageless character became, like Dracula for Bela Lugosi, his legend and his

When I first came to Hollywood in the summer of 1976, little did I know that I would be fortunate enough to meet and sometimes befriend those I admired so much on the screen. One of my first and best friends in the business was director Curtis Harrington. Curtis was and is a renowned but many fascinating and remarkable characters.

Curtis lives in a wonderful Art Nouveau-filled home in the Hollywood Hills, which contains such artifacts as Marlene Dietrich's shoes and props from some of his own films. Hurd Hatfield was to be a house guest for a week or so during June of 1978, and Curtis very kindly arranged a meeting, for which I am forever grateful. Hatfield proved to be a superb raconteur and a good sport regarding his most famous character. It became clear to me during that meeting that the theater really held Hatfield's heart. He confided that he nearly wished he had never played the role that made him world-famous.

At the time, I was seeing a great deal of actress Elizabeth Shepherd, whose career was also overwhelmed by a character created another famous writer-Edgar Allan Poe. Her performance in Roger Corman's TOMB OF LIGEIA (1964) may be the finest ever given in any of Corman's seven Poe films. Elizabeth was an accomplished stage actress and her heart also belonged to the theater.

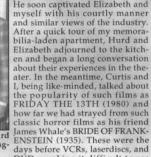
It had been on my mind ever since Curtis' party that, if two people were ever destined to meet, it was certainly the Lady Ligeia and Dorian Gray. With this in mind, I started

urd Hatfield has intrigued me as an actor ever since I was a child and saw him as Dorian in THE PIC-explained my plan to Curtis, he graciously arranged to bring Hurd Hatfield to my little soiree. The result would be an unforgettable afternoon.

Elizabeth Shepherd was the first to arrive. She had recently been to some television auditions and was rather chagrined at the lack of creativity permeating the industry. Talent doesn't necessarily determine who gets the part. A name to draw in the sponsors is the main focus. The situation angered Elizabeth to the point that her license plate read TVQUE, "Que" being one's recognition value in the industry. I was all too aware that Elizabeth was too good an actress not to be working constantly, but we were living in a

town where talent is no guarantee of stardom and success.

Curtis and Hurd soon arrived, the latter looking very dapper in an ultra-white sports jacket. He soon captivated Elizabeth and ton. Curius was and admirer of Holly-party-giver and admirer of Holly-wood's Golden Era, and through him I met not only Hurd Hatfield, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Curtis Harringhous Hatfield, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Curtis Hatfield, Elizabeth Shepher



DORIAN GRAY or anything else unless a special screening

As the host, I soon got us all regrouped in the living room and was delighted that Hurd and Elizabeth were indeed kindred spirits. Soon the conversation turned to the subject of horror films. I remarked that all three of my guests were typecast in the genre in one way or another. Curtis was known as a director of thrillers that either involved Shelley Winters or children. Elizabeth was best known for being Vincent Price's leading lady. And Hurd was forever known as Dorian Gray.

Elizabeth remarked that she was only well known to fans like myself and it meant nothing to casting directors. Curtis agreed and lamented that too many people in positions of authority within the industry knew little of its history, and had no respect for those who had worked in it. Hurd's reflections were more remote, as he lived in Ireland and only came to Hollywood on rare occasions to guest on a TV show or just visit close friends. He felt that typecasting could limit a career as much as it could help it. "Sometimes I wonder if I would have been better off just working in theater and never have done a film as Dorian Gray."







LEFT: Sooner or later, a Vincent Price leading lady winds up with the Merchant of Menace's hands around her lovely throat. It was Elizabeth Shepherd's turn in TOMB OF LIGEIA (1964), considered by many to be the best in American International's Poe cycle. RIGHT: Curtis Harrington takes a breather with star Shelley Winters on the set of WHO-EVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO (1971), BOTTOM RIGHT: Hurd Hatfield holds the groundbreaking work by Parker Tyler on homosexuality in the movies. That's in the movies, not at the movies

It was such a unique situation to hear these three talented individuals express their frustration at what most fans would consider their greatest assets. It proved to me that, in spite of my reverence for the genre, a job was a job. I understood for the first time how Karloff or Whale must have felt when all anyone seemed to remember was their horror personas rather than their versatility and talent. How much it must have grated on them!

One of the most fascinating things I learned during that afternoon came when Hurd confided to me that he'd kept the Egyptian cat prop from DORIAN GRAY. "The Cat of Bast was the giver of eternal life and since everyone assumed I was Dorian Gray, I wasn't about to take any chances with regard to that superstition." He later showed me a photograph of his house in Ireland, and in a small window on the second floor one could plainly see the figure of that cat!

As the afternoon progressed, we all became comfortable enough to discuss the hazards of fame, the pitfalls of anticipation, and the realization that perhaps this was as good as it gets. Hatfield was the first to remark that no one in Hollywood, especially at MGM, wanted to make a film that addressed homosexuality. It was at that point that I handed Hurd my treasured copy of Parker Tyler's seminal work, Screening the Sexes: Homosexuality in the Movies (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972). It was Tyler's belief "that the simple, reactionary two-sex system is a much-outdated in-stitution which reality should persuade us to junk."

Hurd was mesmerized by Tyler's observation that Dorian Gray, as portrayed by Hatfield, "does not seem made of the fine beaten gold of the aristocratic type of beauty visualized by Wilde. Besides, Hatfield is dark, not fair, of course, the tenor of Dorian's relationship with Lord Henry is a polite charade necessary to the concealed meaning of both the movie and the novel. We see Dorian meticulously dressed and serene, strolling through his mansion as if it were the house of a lover's dream." I asked Hatfield if it was difficult being gay and playing a character that MGM made sexually ambiguous. His reply was that, in sophisticated society, the subject never came up. Anyone who was familiar with the works of Oscar Wilde knew this aspect of his persona and moved along. When I tactlessly brought up the 1970 Hel-

mut Berger version of Wilde's story, Hatfield grew defensive, bemoaning the state of the film industry and its obsession with showing everything. For example, Hurd recalled with disgust the scene of Dorian cruising a black sailor in a urinal and lamented the indignities Wilde's creation had suffered at the hands of such libertines.

Elizabeth Shepherd intervened at this point, recalling with her own disgust the firing of director Michael Apted from DAMIEN-OMEN II (1978) and his replacement with Don Taylor (husband of another Price costar, Hazel Court). She hated that an artist's vision could be sabotaged by 20th

Century Fox's lack of confidence in a young director, and that they fell back on merely regurgitating a series of set pieces designed specifically for the splatter crowd. It was just this sort of Hollywood thinking that affected Curtis Harrington, a director whose subtlety and craftsmanship went unappreciated while gore and splatter were the flavor of the month

him. At heart, he was a European "whose true flag was that of Bohemia," a phrase taken from one of his collaborations with the legendary Tennessee Williams (he as actor, Williams as author), the play





Cocktails for

David Del Valle toasts

Hurd Hatfield, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Curtis Harrington

urd Hatfield has intrigued me as an actor ever since I was a child and saw him as Dorian in THE PIC-TURE OF DORIAN GRAY (1945). Subsequently, whenever his name would pop up in such films as the epic EL CID (1961) or the surrealistic MICKEY ONE (1965), Hatfield was always the center of my attention. There is one particular episode of ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS ("None Are So Blind") that permanently etched his persona in my memory. Hatfield portrays an outrageously vain and desperate young man whose fortunes depend on doing away with his wealthy aunt. He gives himself away to the authorities by refusing to acknowledge a large birthmark on the left side of his face, making any of his disguises point-

less. His vanity overwhelms his perfect crime. The teleplay became a metaphor for Hatfield's career as a whole. Regardless of his artistry and skill as a stage and screen actor, the birthmark cre-ated by Oscar Wilde's ageless character became, like Dracula for Bela Lugosi, his legend and his limitation.

When I first came to Hollywood in the summer of 1976, little did I know that I would be fortunate enough to meet and sometimes befriend those I admired so much on the screen. One of my first and best friends in the business was director Curtis Harrington. Curtis was and is a renowned him I met not only Hurd Hatfield, Hatfield, Elizabe but many fascinating and remarkable characters.

Curtis lives in a wonderful Art Nouveau-filled home in the Hollywood Hills, which contains such artifacts as Marlene Dietrich's shoes and props from some of his own films. Hurd Hatfield was to be a house guest for a week or so during June of 1978, and Curtis very kindly arranged a meeting, for which I am forever grateful. Hatfield proved to be a superb raconteur and a good sport regarding his most famous character. It became clear to me during that meeting that the theater really held Hatfield's heart. He confided that he nearly wished he had never played the role that made him world-famous.

At the time, I was seeing a great deal of actress Elizabeth Shepherd, whose career was also overwhelmed by a character created another famous writer-Edgar Allan Poe. Her performance in Roger Corman's TOMB OF LIGEIA (1964) may be the finest ever given in any of Corman's seven Poe films. Elizabeth was an accomplished stage actress and her heart also belonged to the theater.

It had been on my mind ever since Curtis' party that, if two people were ever destined to meet, it was certainly the Lady Ligeia and Dorian Gray. With this in mind, I started organizing a small afternoon cocktail party. The minute I explained my plan to Curtis, he graciously arranged to bring Hurd Hatfield to my little soiree. The result would be an unforgettable afternoon.

Elizabeth Shepherd was the first to arrive. She had recently been to some television auditions and was rather chagrined at the lack of creativity permeating the industry. Talent doesn't necessarily determine who gets the part. A name to draw in the sponsors is the main focus. The situation angered Elizabeth to the point that her license plate read TVQUE, "Que" being one's recognition value in the industry. I was all too aware that Elizabeth was too good an actress not to be working constantly, but we were living in a

town where talent is no guarantee of stardom and success.

Curtis and Hurd soon arrived, the latter looking very dapper in an ultra-white sports jacket. He soon captivated Elizabeth and myself with his courtly manner and similar views of the industry. After a quick tour of my memora-bilia-laden apartment, Hurd and Elizabeth adjourned to the kitchen and began a long conversation about their experiences in the theater. In the meantime, Curtis and I, being like-minded, talked about the popularity of such films as FRIDAY THE 13TH (1980) and how far we had strayed from such classic horror films as his friend James Whale's BRIDE OF FRANK-ENSTEIN (1935). These were the days before VCRs, laserdiscs, and DVDs, making it difficult to see



party-giver and admirer of Holly-wood's Golden Era, and through Hatfield, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Curtis Harring-

DORIAN GRAY or anything else unless a special screening

As the host, I soon got us all regrouped in the living room and was delighted that Hurd and Elizabeth were indeed kindred spirits. Soon the conversation turned to the subject of horror films. I remarked that all three of my guests were typecast in the genre in one way or another. Curtis was known as a director of thrillers that either involved Shelley Winters or children. Elizabeth was best known for being Vincent Price's leading lady. And Hurd was forever known as Dorian Gray.

Elizabeth remarked that she was only well known to fans like myself and it meant nothing to casting directors. Curtis agreed and lamented that too many people in positions of authority within the industry knew little of its history, and had no respect for those who had worked in it. Hurd's reflections were more remote, as he lived in Ireland and only came to Hollywood on rare occasions to guest on a TV show or just visit close friends. He felt that typecasting could limit a career as much as it could help it. "Sometimes I wonder if I would have been better off just working in theater and never have done a film as Dorian Gray."





LEFT: Sooner or later, a Vincent Price leading lady winds up with the Merchant of Menace's hands around her lovely throat. It was Elizabeth Shepherd's turn in TOMB OF LIGEIA (1964), considered by many to be the best in American International's Poe cycle. RIGHT: Curtis Harrington takes a breather with star Shelley Winters on the set of WHO-EVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO (1971). BOTTOM RIGHT: Hurd Hatfield holds the groundbreaking work by Parker Tyler on homosexuality in the movies. That's in the movies, not at the movies

It was such a unique situation to hear these three talented individuals express their frustration at what most fans would consider their greatest assets. It proved to me that, in spite of my reverence for the genre, a job was a job. I understood for the first time how Karloff or Whale must have felt when all anyone seemed to remember was their horror personas rather than their versatility and talent. How much it must have grated on them!

One of the most fascinating things I learned during that afternoon came when Hurd confided to me that he'd kept the Egyptian cat prop from DORIAN GRAY. "The Cat of Bast was the giver of eternal life and since everyone assumed I was Dorian Gray, I wasn't about to take any chances with regard to that superstition." He later showed me a photograph of his house in Ireland, and in a small window on the second floor one could plainly see the figure of that cat!

As the afternoon progressed, we all became comfortable enough to discuss the hazards of fame, the pitfalls of anticipation, and the realization that perhaps this was as good as it gets. Hatfield was the first to remark that no one in Hollywood, especially at MGM, wanted to make a film that addressed homosexuality. It was at that point that I handed Hurd my treasured copy of Parker Tyler's seminal work, Screening the Sexes: Homosexuality in the Movies (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972). It was Tyler's belief "that the simple, reactionary two-sex system is a much-outdated institution which reality should persuade us to junk.

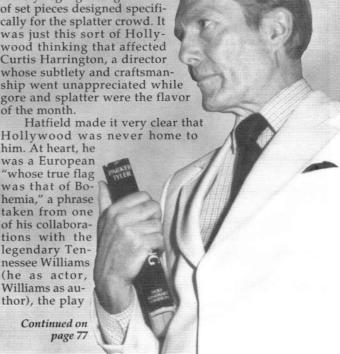
Hurd was mesmerized by Tyler's observation that Dorian Gray, as portrayed by Hatfield, "does not seem made of the fine beaten gold of the aristocratic type of beauty visualized by Wilde. Besides, Hatfield is dark, not fair, of course, the tenor of Dorian's relationship with Lord Henry is a polite charade necessary to the concealed meaning of both the movie and the novel. We see Dorian meticulously dressed and serene, strolling through his mansion as if it were the house of a lover's dream." I asked Hatfield if it was difficult being gay and playing a character that MGM made sexually ambiguous. His reply was that, in sophisticated society, the subject never came up. Anyone who was familiar with the works of Oscar Wilde knew this aspect of his persona and moved along. When I tactlessly brought up the 1970 Helmut Berger version of Wilde's story, Hatfield grew defensive, bemoaning the state of the film industry and its obsession with showing everything. For example, Hurd recalled with disgust the scene of Dorian cruising a black sailor in a urinal and lamented the indignities Wilde's creation had suffered at the hands of such libertines.

Elizabeth Shepherd intervened at this point, recalling with her own disgust the firing of director Michael Apted from DAMIEN-OMEN II (1978) and his replacement with Don Taylor (husband of another Price costar, Hazel Court). She hated that an artist's vision could be sabotaged by 20th

Century Fox's lack of confidence in a young director, and that they fell back on merely regurgitating a series of set pieces designed specifically for the splatter crowd. It was just this sort of Hollywood thinking that affected Curtis Harrington, a director whose subtlety and craftsmanship went unappreciated while gore and splatter were the flavor of the month.

him. At heart, he was a European "whose true flag was that of Bohemia," a phrase taken from one of his collaborations with the legendary Tennessee Williams (he as actor, Williams as au-

> Continued on page 77



BOOK ENDS

The Scarlet Street Review of Books

ROGER CORMAN

Beverly Gray Renaissance Books, 2000 304 pages-\$23.95

Though unauthorized (the subtitle is An Unauthorized Biography of the Godfather of Indie Filmmaking) this is very much an insider's view of Roger Corman. Beverly Gray worked as Corman's assistant for some 16 months at New World Pictures, and again spent eight years as story editor at Concorde-New Horizons with Corman. In this respect, Beverly Gray not only has a remarkable grasp on Corman personally, but she also has the connections to others in Corman's orbit—factors that are certainly a plus for any biographer. She puts these things to her advantage, creating comprehensive, heavily fact-laden (sometimes too much so) picture of Roger Corman and what drives him. This much makes for a wonderful book on the filmmaker.

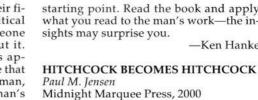
Gray quickly establishes the dichotomy that marks Corman in her introduction, where she describes first meeting Corman and discussing "motion picture aesthetics" with him, promising to read-at his insistence-Siegfried Kracauer's Theory of Film (1960). She writes: "Of course, I complied, wondering how this ponderous tome would shed light on the making of Corman's cinematic staples: low-budget monster movies and biker flicks. I'm still wondering. He never mentioned Krac-auer again." While that neatly sums up a central peculiarity about Corman-who sometimes seems either a very deliberate artist, or a completely accidental one-it also sums up the reason that this book is only a part of the story of Roger Corman. Gray is certainly correct in calling Kracis equally on the mark concerning Corman's staple product, but this should clue us in on the fact that Grav is not about to give us a biography that even attempts to establish Corman's actual place in film on an artistic basis, nor is she going to explore the works of Corman in any depth. The pictures, their meanings, their qualities (or lack thereof) are mostly re-

ferred to in passing or in terms of their financial success or failure. Most critical evaluation is there only when someone other than the author talks about it. There's nothing wrong with this approach, so long as the reader is aware that the book is more about Corman the man, Corman the businessman, and Corman's methods of working than it is about Corman's work.

Admitting what Roger Corman does not offer, it should be noted that what it does offer is fascinating. This inner look at the workings of Corman's film companiesnot to mention the workings of Corman's mind—takes the reader into a delightfully quirky world, ruled by a man who seems at war with himself—one part iconoclast to one part hidebound traditionalist. Corman emerges as the ultimate hipster, who, at bottom, is uncomfortable with being hip. Intentionally or not, Gray offers us a Roger Corman who isn't so much half-huckster/half-artist, as one who is just too conflicted and too personally indifferent to the rigors of art to ever quite cross the line into the realm of being a

For anyone wishing to understand Cor-

starting point. Read the book and apply what you read to the man's work-the insights may surprise you. —Ken Hanke



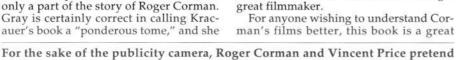
Midnight Marquee Press, 2000 224 pages—\$20

Iust when you thought everything worth writing on the subject of Alfred Hitchcock had already been written, along comes Paul Jensen. Hitchcock Becomes HITCHCOCK: The British Years should take a place alongside esteemed tomes such as Hitchcock/Truffaut (1967), Hitchcock on Hitchcock (1995), and the Donald Spoto duo (1983's The Art of Alfred Hitchcock and 1976's The Dark Side of Genius) on the bookshelf of any serious student of the great director's work. In a taut 224 pages, Jensen masterfully reveals key techniques and prominent themes that defined and shaped the Hitchcock ouvre.

For starters, Jensen breaks down the cinematic techniques Hitchcock brought to his early British films. Pictures such as BLACKMAIL (1929), MURDER (1930), and SABOTAGE (1936) betrayed more of the director's German Expressionist influence than his later films. Hitchcock used various devices (montage, composite dissolves, subjective camera, juxtaposition of sounds and images) to bring the viewer inside characters' heads. The director's later British and American films would be more straightforward. Jensen also tracks the emergent central Hitchcockian themes and is particularly effective at emphasizing Hitch's fatalistic attitudes about romance in general and

marriage in particular.

In the process, Jensen charts Hitchcock's emergence in the early sound era as one of England's foremost film craftsmen. He argues persuasively that the critical and commercial failure of RICH AND STRANGE (1932) represented a pivotal moment for Hitchcock. Afterward, the director redefined himself as a suspense specialist. Hitch pushed the loftier thematic elements of his films into the background and, in the process, emerged as one of cinema's most popular entertainers and greatest artists, a maker of films enjoyable on a surface level, but with richer rewards waiting beneath the surface for more astute audiences.



to discuss a magazine article on the set of PIT AND THE PENDULUM (1961).



However, because the greater themes of Hitchcock's films were not in the fore-front, Hitch remained underappreciated by most critics during his own lifetime. With precision and clarity, Jensen demonstrates that these deeper meanings remained in the director's films, even though Hitchcock himself often denied their existence. "Like the best dramatists," Jensen writes toward the end of his book, "he blended character with action, often rendering the two inseparable. Like the best artists, he mixed conscious expression with unconscious revelation, often leaving viewers uncertain where the first ends and the second begins."

Jensen maps out his positions clearly and supports them by reverse-engineering relevant films scene by scene, and by quoting Hitchcock himself (with sound bites gathered from numerous sources). Although the book focuses specifically on the British era, Jensen's insights apply to nearly all of Hitchcock's work. Readers should come away with a deeper appreciation of not only the British pictures, but the entire Hitchcock filmography. Jensen's insight is matched only by his splendid wordcraft. This is a lively and compelling, even addictive, read.

Midnight Marquee Press proves the old saw about a book and its cover by wrapping Hitchcock Becomes HITCHCOCK in a bland and somewhat confusing package. On the cover, an elder Hitch squints, open-mouthed, past his own silhouette at a younger Hitch, who's looking off the page entirely, perhaps because the right side of his head is obscured by an inexplicable black blotch. All this is in black-and-white, on a red-fading-to-white background. (Wait a minute! I just realized that the black botch is actually the silhouette of the younger Hitch! So the elder Hitch is looking past his own silhouette and the silhouette of the younger Hitch at the younger Hitch. But hey, it took me months to figure that out!) A book this good deserves a more attractive presentation.

Do not be deterred by such quibbles, brave reader. Any new work from Jensen—author of *The Cinema of Fritz Lang* (1969), *Boris Karloff and His Films* (1974), and *The Men Who Made the Monsters* (1996)—is cause for celebration. *Hitchcock Becomes HITCHCOCK* is his best work so far, a revealing and enjoyable examination of one of our foremost filmmakers.

—Mark Clark

THE GOREHOUND'S GUIDE TO SPLATTER FILMS

Scott Aaron Stine
McFarland & Co., 2000
296 pages—\$29.95
Some will say that splatter films don't fit
in the Scarlet Street oeuvre, but when

video stores first opened in the eighties and horror fans used to haunt the shelves for the latest fright films, many of those films—especially the more obscure Euro horrors—served up splatter and gore by the bucketful. With the advent of DVD, many of those same titles are with us again, often in prints superior to their video counterparts of two decades ago.

The capsule reviews that make up *The Gorehound's Guide to Splatter Films of the 1960s and 1970s* are funny and precise, and cover a wide range of titles, listed alphabetically. The book (the first in a planned trilogy) begins with a brief introduction and definition of what makes a splatter film, followed by an interesting appendix on the "cultural" phenomenon of snuff films and a list of sources—including *Scarlet Street*—where one may buy many of the titles covered.

It's the kind of reference book you can either read from cover to cover in one sitting or browse through occasionally. Either way, it's a good read. I plan on taking a copy with me the next time I visit the local video store.

—Kevin G Shinnick

BING CROSBY: A POCKETFUL OF DREAMS

Gary Giddens Little, Brown and Company 728 pages—\$30

In ROAD TO UTOPIA (1946), the best of the seven road comedies starring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and Dorothy Lamour, Crosby loses a talent contest and its cash prize to a trained monkey. Hope gives him the evil eye, and cracks, "Next time I bring Sinatra."

If Hope had brought Sinatra, ROAD TO UTOPIA would be better known today, since there's no denying that Old Blue Eyes has eclipsed Der Bingle as the most celebrated pop singer of the 20th century. That's too bad, because Bing Crosby's accomplishments are prodigious, and he deserves far better than the relative anonymity into which he's fallen.

In Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams, the first of a two-volume set covering the life of the Old Groaner, Gary Giddens tackles the much-needed task of setting the second straight. He reminds us that Bing was the first full-time vocalist signed to an orchestra, that he made more studio recordings than any other singer in history (400 more than Sinatra), that he recorded the most popular record of all time ("White Christmas," the only single to make American pop charts 20 times), that he had 396 charted records between 1927 and 1962 (compared to 220 for Paul Whiteman, 209 for Sinatra, 149 for Elvis Presley, 129 for Glenn Miller, 118 for Nat King Cole, 85 for Louis Armstrong, 68 for the Beatles), that he scored the most num-



Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and golf.

ber one hits ever (38, compared to 24 for the Beatles and 18 for Elvis), and that between 1915 and 1980 he was the only film actor to rank as the number-one box-office attraction five times!

Giddens reminds us, in this book that covers Bing Crosby's life and career only up to 1940, that the man was a star of the first magnitude.

The author's research is exhaustive without ever becoming overwhelming. There's also an "horrific" subtext to some of his writing. Crosby's name doesn't usually come up in connection with fright films, so it was a surprise to learn that he acted in a college production of THE BELLS, that hoary old chestnut made into a 1926 silent film with Boris Karloff. When Crosby and Al Rinker (before Harry Barris joined them to form The Rhythm Boys) made their first appearance in a movie theater as an opening act for the feature presentation, the film was THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1925)! Giddens may very well be a closet horror fan, in fact, since he makes reference to facts known only to such creatures of the night (for instance, that one of Bing's earliest signature songs was composed in part by George Waggner, the director of 1941's THE WOLF MAN), or alludes to horror films to make a point (as when he attests to the popularity of radio in the early thirties by suggesting that 1931's FRANK-ENSTEIN is rife with allusions to the burgeoning medium).

But you needn't seek horror references to find this book a fascinating, well-written study of the man who, for a good part of the past hundred years, was the coolest of the cool and, as a singer, the greatest of the great.

-Richard Valley

Coming Soon in Scarlet Street: RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE, THE FLY, JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS, THE BLACK CAT, KISS OF THE VAMPIRE, CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, and THE BRIDES OF DRACULA!

SHANE BRIANT

Continued from page 51

when he put it on for the first time. He said behind this awful mask, "What do you think of it?"—and I couldn't say what I thought because I thought it looked so awful and unbelievable! I tried to think of something kind, so I looked over the whole suit and said, "God, the feet are great! They look the most believable thing." Dave said, "The feet are mine!" (Laughs) The only things that were his own were the hands and feet, and they were the only things that looked believeable. You see that monster trying to play the violin-I mean, Mel Brooks couldn't have done a better job! (Laughs) In fact, the only thing that was really enjoyable about making that film was working with Peter Cushing, who was a true professional, and with some of the actors in the smaller parts, who were old stalwarts of the British cinema. Every day I'd come in and see someone who'd been around for years and years, being totally professional and giving lovely little performances. SS: Actors such as Patrick Troughton, Peter

Madden, Bernard Lee SB: Then came the monster and you were left wondering what on Earth was going

on! In those days, too, they'd always cast a young girl with nice rosy cheeks and big tits-regardless of talent! (Laughs) I'm not casting aspersions on Madeline Smith, but Hammer's priority was not to get the best actress—just the best tits. That's the way it was done. These days, they're beginning to realize that you don't need Miss Universe in the female lead; you can have someone like Ellen Barkin, who's as ugly as sin but sexy to a lot of people. It's the same with Barbra Streisand. They can act, and to be able to act is more important to the role than whether they can take off their clothes and flash a great pair of tits.

SS: Was Madeline Smith unable to handle dialogue? Is that the real reason she's mute in FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL?

SB: Oh, no, I don't think so! I don't mean to give the impression that Madeline Smith couldn't act!

SS: You mentioned Peter Cushing . . .

SB: Lovely guy, Peter; very professional, worked very hard on his lines-and in those days he used to have a problem learning and speaking his lines. He was very aware; he didn't want to make mistakes and stumble over the words, so he would speak quite slowly. But he was always on time, and always worked very hard-nothing was too much trouble. Very sad man, because his wife had died and he didn't have very much interest in life. He lived for his work. He was always very charming to me and always very helpful with suggestions. I learned a lot from Peter.

SS: Was it difficult to keep a straight face while performing the film's operations?

SB: Oh, yes, absolutely! The scene where we eventually take out the brain from the monster was particularly memorable. We were supposed to shoot it on a Friday and never got 'round to it, so it was postponed till Monday. Well, they had put a sheep's brain into the body and didn't refrigerate it over the weekend, so when we shot the scene on Monday I cut open the top of the head and the smell was so appalling from this rotten, decomposing sheep's brain that we almost threw up. SS: Oh, my God! (Laughs)

SB: Peter's line was, "Well, right! We've done that! Let's have some lunch!" And in came Madeline with a tray of food, and he looked at it and said, "Ummm, kidneys!"

(Laughs) We had a good time.

SS: Terence Fisher wasn't in very good health at the time he directed FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL. He'd also had a serious accident some time before, when he was hit by a car and broke his leg.

SB: He was very frail and looked very old. He hobbled around with a cane, but his mind was still pretty on the ball and he knew what he was doing. It was, "Now we do this and now we do that." Directing for him was like riding a bicycle; he just got up on it and did it again! I don't want it to sound like it was a piece of cake, but he could have directed it from a hospital bed with an intravenous drip in his arm. It was that simple for him.

SS: Do you feel he was a good technical director or a good actor's director?

SB: He was both, really. Technically he was very good in an old-fashioned way, the way they were making films in England going back to the thirties. FRANK-ENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL was made right at the end of his life, and he had his way of doing things, which he did very professionally. His were straightforward films, nothing unusual about them, no new ground being broken. As far as actors were concernedwell, he always listened to my ideas and was never overbearing. I like directors who give me inspiration; I don't like a director to say no to everything I suggest. SS: Fisher rarely used tracking shots.

SB: Oh, he never had much time to shoot them. It was time more than anything else. It was always a bit rushed and the budget was always very tight with Hammer. There was never very much money. SS: There's a scene in the film with you being

hosed down by the asylum attendants. Was the force of the water really that powerful?

SB: Oh, yes! It was very painful, actually, because the force of a fire hose is quite strong. The stunt coordinator said, "Don't worry, we'll make damn sure that we don't hit you in the balls." Then they hit me in the balls! (Laughs) They got me in the face, too. At the end of it, my entire body was red and bruised, as if I'd been hit by a prize fighter.

SS: Hopefully, they didn't spend more than a day filmimg in. You mightn't have survived. SB: No, we spent just one afternoonwhich was still exhausting, but when you're that young, you'll do anything. A director says, "Look, Shane, I'm sure you can jump off this building into this airbag. I'm just sure you're going to do it really well." And you do it! (Laughs) I remember on THE MACKINTOSH MAN, the John Huston picture, the stunt coordinator said, "Look, there's this scene where your character runs down Harry

Andrews and kills him outside a railway station. Mr. Huston likes his actors to do their own stunts if it's not dangerous, and to our minds this isn't dangerous. All you have to do is drive in a straight line at 19 miles an hour." I said, "Not 20, but 19 exactly?" "Well, just under 20 would be perfect. Just keep going all the way past at 19 miles an hour and the stunt man will come up at an angle and do a roll over the bonnet." I was nervous, but Mr. Huston wanted me to do it, John Huston wanted me to do it, so of course I said I'd do it.

SS: Of course!

SB: No problem! I'm a real pro and I'm not scared and all those things that you say when you're 20. So just before we did it, up came this stunt coordinator and he said, "Oh, you better wear these leather gloves." I said, "Well, I don't like wearing leather gloves when I'm driving." He said, "Well, just in case something hap-pens." I said, "But nothing's going to hap-pen; you said it was safe." "Yeah, yeah, it's very safe, but just in case something happens. For instance, if this guy should come in contact with the windscreen, you might have to punch it out. That's why you need the leather gloves." By this time was shitting myself thinking that Paul, the stunt man, might come through the windscreen! I asked about it, and the stunt coordinator said, "No, no, it won't happen!"

SS: Famous last words! (Laughs)

SB: Exactly! So off I went in this very old rover, trying to estimate 19 miles an hour-and, of course, the stunt man got caught up in the bumper and went up in the air and came flying through the windscreen with this tremendous explosion! He was hanging half in and half out of the car. I was thinking the man's dead, but I couldn't stop 'cause he'd have gone straight out and under the front wheels. Finally I stopped and the guy was actually all right, though he was very bruised and had a bit of concussion. The makeup woman came running up and started brushing the glass off my face. "You better get the glass off your face before a little piece goes behind your eye ball and cuts your optic nerve, which has been known to happen before but it won't happen now." (Laughs) And the stunt coordinator came over and said, "Are you okay, Shane? That really looked great, but we have to do it again, because you seemed to hesitate when Paul came through the window." I said, "I seemed to hesitate! What are you talking about, I seemed to hesitate! I thought the guy was dead! Now you're telling me we're going to do it again? Forget it!" So I don't do any stunts, now; I leave that to the professionals. I don't leap off high buildings or do anything the slightest bit dangerous. The fire hose in FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL? No, wouldn't do it again!

SS: In 1980, you worked with Jack Palance on HAWK, THE SLAYER.

SB: He's a lovely guy; he's got a wonderful, black sense of humor. One day, a girl said, "Jack, are you going to lunch?" He said, "Why, do you want me to buy you lunch?" She said, "Oh, no, it's not that I want you to buy me lunch. I just wondered if you were going to lunch with friends." He said, "Why, do you want to meet my friends?" Nobody ever knew if he was joking or not. We used to have lunch every day at Pinewood, but mostly he kept to himself. He's a bit of a loner.

SS: You played his son.

SB: Frankly, I thought my casting as Jack Palance's son left a lot to be desired in the credibility stakes. (Laughs) I don't think I look tremendously like Jack Palance, but I was very glad to do it. My favorite line from HAWK, THE SLAYER was, "I am Gogo, son of Voltan!" I said, "If I say that, everyone will laugh!" The director said, "No, no, that's really good and I like that." And then when I saw it in the cinema, everyone laughed. You can never rely too much on your director.

SS: Especially on a line like that! Is there a particular type of movie that you like doing?

SB: Comedy, actually. I've always liked doing comedy, the well-written comedy that exists in the States and sometimes in England. Really well-scripted one liners.

SS: Why did you move to Australia?

SB: I moved to Australia because I did LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER, and also because I'd been living with an Australian girl for 10 years in England and her visa had run out. She had to go back to Australia, and I came over to do a promotional tour for LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER, a month of talk shows and press and all that stuff. At the time, there was a huge boom in Australian films. The weather was fantastic and the food was cheap and the wine was cheap, and you could sit on the beach and be poor. It was better than living in London and working for the BBC and being paid badly, so I came over here and did about two films a year for about five or six years. The good times! It's a nice place to live, but every year I go back to the States to do the pilot season. I stay in Los Angeles for about four months, and do the odd thing or two and hope that I will actually get lucky. When I was 20, I would have sooner done Chekhov than do sitcoms in Hollywood; I'd be more interested in the work and growing as an actor. Now that I'm older, if some-



Win a few, lose a few—but poor old Victor Frankenstein (Peter Cushing) loses them all! Dr. Simon Helder (Shane Briant) and the mute Sarah (Madeline Smith) try to comfort him.

one offered me a million dollars to do DAYS OF OUR LIVES, I'd do that.

SS: Do you feel it's part of an actor's job to sell himself as a product?

SB: I think so, yes. You've got to promote yourself to make yourself interesting, so that, when people see a photograph of you in the paper, they say, "Oh, gee! That's the guy who took all his clothes off in front of the Queen at Royal Ascot!" (Laughs) Everyone knows Robert Redford, but if you're just another ordinary actor and you ask people, "Have you ever heard of Shane Briant?"—well, maybe three have. If you're on the front page of *The National Enquirer*, stark naked with Madonna, people tend to remember you the next week.

SS: They also save that copy of The Enquirer. SB: Years ago, when we were filming STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING, I met with a publicist. He said, "There are two

ways to promote yourself. You can have dinner three times a week at the White Elephant Club on the river and have lunch three times a week at Burke's." That was where everyone used to go to be seen, but I said, "That would cost me thousands of dollars; I can't do that." He said, "The alternative is that you buy a houseboat and live on the Thames, and buy an elephant and paint it pink and chain it to the front of the houseboat." I said, "What?" He said, "Everyone in London will know that you're that peculiar actor with a pink elephant on the front of his houseboat! Everyone will know who you are and you'll become a celebrity. Ultimately it will depend on your talent, but people will know who you are." Anyway, I didn't do either—but maybe I should have bought that houseboat and that elephant!

SEX O'PEEL

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viction—he has been led astray by these older men, both of whom covet him for his innocence and beauty. Peel, who was certainly a looker and was once a protege of acting great John Gielgud, may have been drawing the characterization from

his own experience.

"David, when I knew him, was a very young, very attractive, very nice boy," Dean explained. "He looked marvelous all his life, to the point that he may have had a portrait hidden in his attic. I didn't ask him. I knew nothing about his personal life, really, or whether he had a boyfriend or patron or any of that. He was just fun to be with, fun to have around. We didn't first meet at the pool; we met professionally and struck up a friendship. We lost track of each other, because I moved to America and he gave

up acting. He virtually disappeared from the scene after that, and I'm afraid I didn't keep up with him at all."

Roy Dean's own acting career was superceded by photography in the sixties, and he's still at it. "My first book came out in 1966, and this new one is my 10th book. It's so big I can't even pick it up! I told the publisher, 'I can't even fit it in my bookcase.' And he said, 'It's not supposed to fit in your bookcase! It's a coffee-table book!' It's been a big success and my name is getting around. It drives me crazy, though, because strange people suddenly want to speak with me. They say, 'Hello, Mr. Dean!' or 'Hello, Roy!' and I want to say, 'Who the fuck are you?' In Palm Springs, they call me an icon in my own time!"

Sadly, Dean has no photos of David Peel, nothing that captures his handsome friend in seemingly eternal youth by that public pool in England. More than a pho



When Bob Hope referred to Gale Sondergaard in ROAD TO RIO (1948) as the Black Widow, horror fans got the joke. Sondergaard had already played a similar femme fatale in SPIDER WOMAN (1944) and (pictured with Rondo **Hatton) SPIDER WOMAN STRIKES BACK (1946)**

PERSONALITY PLUS

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do. They could be the Andrews Brothers!" "Yeah, Patti, LaVerne, and Pancho," agrees Hope, sensing impending disaster. To further the image, Crosby teaches the Wieres three "hep" phrases—"You're telling me," "You're in the groove, Jackson," and "This is murder"—to which they are supposed to respond on finger signals. This mad scheme quickly proves hopeless when they run afoul of the boss, a connoisseur of American slang, who wants to "chew the grease" with the boys before they go on, and inadvertently gives them the signals at all the wrong moments. It's probably the most concentrated, carefully structured comedy scene in any Road picture, matched only by a terrific pantomime scene (inspired by Laurel and Hardy) with Crosby, Hope, the Wieres, and five hats.

Even more than previous entries, RIO cares not one whit about its own plot, which is spoofed mercilessly. When the pair outline their plans for a dramatic finish in which they rescue Lamour and foil Sondergaard, we hear an agonized scream, and Hope explains, "It's the Warner Brothers; they're very jealous." The help offered by mysterious good guy Rodrigues (Frank Puglia) turns out to be virtually unrelated footage of Jerry Colonna leading a cavalry charge that never arrives. ("Whaddaya know? We never quite made it! Exciting, though, wasn't it?") Even the all-important "papers" (which no one ever mentions without first looking in both directions for potential eavesdroppers) that will thwart Sondergaard's evil plans are dismissed when Crosby rips them up, gravely informing us, "The world must never know."

RIO has been released on DVD by a small company named Brentwood Home Video, but there's no reason to fear the sloppy transfers and poor quality usually associated with minor labels. The film looks perfectly fine (though slightly grainy in spots), and the sound is excellent.

ROAD TO BALI has been given three DVD releases by Platinum Disc Corporation, Laserlight, and Brentwood Home Video. (Stick with Brentwood; their disc is far superior.) The film is almost impossible to dislike, yet it's unquestionably a marked comedown for the series. As with UTOPIA, the plot is a large part of the problem, but where the earlier entry insisted that the plot was of value, it at least had a plot. BALI makes the same mistake without realizing that it has no plot at all! Because of this, the entire enterprise seems a little dull-witted, and, worse, a little condescending. That it has achieved a little niche in film history by being the only Road Picture in color is too bad, since of all the Roads, it needs color the least. It's less elaborate than RIO and less exotic than the earlier films, and color only serves to emphasize its essential smallness.

The basic premise is classic Road Picture formula—the boys on the run from maritally-inclined ladies and their shotgun-toting relatives, drift into an adventure by posing as deep-sea divers. Individual moments—the pair singing "The Whiffenpoof Song" in the midst of a flock of sheep that helpfully contributes the requisite "bah-bah-bahs, Hope and Crosby surrounded by amorous native girls and hearing an offscreen scream ("It's Errol Flynn, he can't stand it.")-delight, but too many of the gags are too obvi-

ously set up.

Still, the film boasts many nice touches. When a branch the boys are leaning on collapses, they remain magically in place. "Why don't we fall?" asks Crosby. "Paramount wouldn't dare—at your age," explains Hope. "The Merry-Go-Runaround" is a pleasant song, staged with a sense of fun. Best, though, is the comic culmination of the Hope/ Crosby relationship ending up in their marriage to each other! Decked out in native headgear, each thinks he is marrying Lamour. When they wake the next morning with only each other in the marriage bed, Hope remarks, "One of us better go to Reno before Louella finds out about this. It's all in fun, of course, but it does seem an apt summation of the series. The more traditional ending, in which Crosby ends up with Lamour and a magically produced Jane Russell (in her dance-hall costume from 1952's SON OF PALE-FACE) doesn't alter the fact that, according to the mythology of the series, the boys are legally married on a tropical island somewhere in the Paramount South Seas

Ten years later came THE ROAD TO HONG KONG. This British-made effort by Panama and Frank to revive the Road Pictures was undeniably ill-advised, and the problem was compounded by replacing Lamour with Joan Collins, while relegating Lamour to an insulting, but amusing, guest bit as "our special cup of tea." Some of the individual sequences are certainly choice, and the film boasts a splendid villain in Robert Morley, but it's just too late in the day—a situation underlined by the presence of the up-and-coming Peter Sellers in a guest part as an Indian doctor. (After explaining how to extract the venom from a snake bite by sucking the poison out of the wound, he is asked what happens if the snake bites you in a place you can't reach. "That is when you find out who your real friends are," he replies.)

HONG KONG works reasonably well in its earlier portions, gamely trotting out the old gags and situations. The songs, while not quite up to the standards of the original films, are pleasant, and, despite sounding too much like studio recordings, are often well woven into the action, especially the title tune. The film has a marked tendency toward mechanical gags, which are at odds with the freewheeling atmosphere of the films it seeks to emulate. This is why the relatively simple sequence in which the boys briefly enlist Lamour's aid is the best thing in the film. Upon hearing the plot so far, Dottie opts to hide the duo. "From the spies?" asks Hope. "No, from the critics," she reasons, dressing them as part of her cabaret act-which, of course, they proceed to destroy with the help of a mustache-eating fish. Nothing else in the film surpasses this, and by the ending the whole affair becomes bogged down in a series of effects-oriented gags involving space flight. The idea of Hope and Crosby in orbit probably seemed appealing in theory. In practice, it's extremely flat.

HONG KONG wasn't a disgraceful end to the series. (Other comedy teams-Laurel and Hardy, The Marx Brothers, Abbott and Costello-certainly went out on worse notes.) However, it's the earlier films that will always define the series, and it's comforting to know that with the flick of a switch, we can conjure up our old friends (who will be magically as they always have been) and travel with them

down their various screwy and tuneful roads.

THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

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most previous productions. Helmut Berger—perhaps drawing on his own turbulent life as movie star and lover of director Luchino Visconti—plays Dorian as the kind of man who creates so much emotional wreckage wherever he goes that he'd curse his own life even without supernatural help. The portrait only prolongs the period in which he can get by on his looks and do the kinds of things he'd probably do anyway.

The main tension in the film stems from the long, evolving power struggle between Dorian and Henry. Dorian, who takes Henry's cynical epigrams more seriously than Henry ever does, will sleep with anyone to gain an advantage—even the repellant but rich Mrs. Ruxton. In her stable, he dispassionately fucks her from behind, as they stand in the stall with a stallion named Prince Charming (Dorian's nickname in Wilde's novel, though not

in this film).

By this time, the painting has changed enough for Dorian to take it upstairs and hide it under a red velvet covering, in his attic-and no wonder, considering Dorian's social life! When Gwendolyn jealously catches Dorian with another female guest on Henry's yacht, he makes love to Gwendolyn, too. Then the two women have sex while Dorian takes a shower. When Henry follows Dorian into the shower stall and begins soaping him, Dorian doesn't seem totally surprised, and doesn't resist. In another funny, ribald scene, Dorian cruises a country marina. He and a handsome black man lock eyes. In a public restroom, the two use the urinals, their backs to the camera, then turn their heads toward each other slowly, and give each other meaningful looks. At the same time that he's behaving like gay playwright and notorious tea-room devotee Joe Orton (considered by many the "modern" successor to Wilde), Dorian earns a reputation as a Don Juan. (Though he seduces women for financial advantage or to gain control of their husbands, it seems unlikely that a gay man would sleep with women by the dozens.)

Once the portrait liberates Dorian from conventional morality, though, he's probably meant to be a true satyr, bisexual as satyrs are in ancient mythology. The film carries the portrait theme beyond the painting. Renderings of Dorian now include photographs, as he starts posing for X-rated magazines. From a sidewalk vendor, Basil buys one such publication, called Cinema X ("International Guide for Adult Audiences"), which features a cover shot of Dorian. Furtively, Basil hides the magazine in his newspaper so that he can look at the pictures secretly on the busy street. The constant use of pictures reinforces the idea that Dorian is growing more superficial, turning into a collection of images more than a real human being. When Henry wonders aloud how Dorian stays so youthful, Dorian says, "I sold

my soul to the Devil. You introduced me to him."

The black cat stares impassively as Basil finally confronts Dorian at home and remonstrates with him over his "compulsive behavior that the whole world knows about." "And is jealous of," says Dorian. Basil will have none of it. "You corrupt and destroy everyone who comes in contact with you," he complains—and, almost as though to prove him right, Dorian shows the artist upstairs to the secret attic room. In a frenzy, Dorian strips the drape off the picture and says, "Unveil my soul, Basil. See what we've created together! . . . It's your fault! You and that stinking portrait!" Dorian impulsively stabs Basil to death. As Basil's head strikes the desk, a vase falls to the floor and breaks: it is the end of the extended flashback, and we are back to the beginning of the story.

In a red-lit a night club, The Black Cock ("Members Only"), full of dancers gyrating to loud music, Dorian phones Alan Campbell and talks him into a meeting. Dorian pushes women away from him as he leaves the club. When

someone calls Dorian "Sir Galahad" (the pet name given him by Sybil in this version), James Vane, home from his long sea voyages, overhears and follows Dorian out of the club, threatening to shoot him in revenge for Sybil's death. Dorian convinces James that he can't be the same man who seduced Sybil, because he's much too young. Back in the club, a gay couple (one strongly resembling Oscar Wilde) reveals Dorian's true age to the incredulous sailor.

Back home, Dorian blackmails Alan Campbell into getting rid of Basil's body by threatening to make public a set of photos of Dorian having sex with Alan's wife. It's a rare example of one of the most overtly homosexual aspects of Wilde's novel (the relationship between Dorian and Alan)

being heterosexualized for this very gay film.

Some time later, at shooting party on Dorian's country estate, James Vane is shot and killed by accident, as in the novel. Once again, Dorian escapes peril, but he's falling apart from the stress. He asks Henry, in what appears to be a postcoital conversation, "Can't men change? I'm tired. Tired of it all." In a close shot, from the waist up, Dorian and Henry look as though they're lying nude and sweaty in bed together—but then the camera pulls back to reveal that they're lying on racks in a bathhouse sauna. They're side by side, yes, but at different levels, with Dorian slightly above Henry. Henry is covered with a towel from the waist down, while Dorian has one hand strategically placed to cover the naughty bits. (The "R" rating stays safe!)

Later, watching Dorian bathe nude—though not frontally—in the cold pool, Henry speculates about Basil's disappearance. Dorian hints that Basil is dead, and goes so far as to say, "I might have killed him." Henry doesn't believe it, but guesses aloud that Dorian must have sold his soul. When Dorian says that even youth is boring, Henry chuckles and says, "I'd give anything to be so bored—anything, that is, except get up early, and make love to women." (Wilde's actual line is "To win back my youth there is nothing I would not do—nothing—except take exercise, get up early, or be a useful member of the community.") Disgusted by his own body's signs of age, Henry prattles on and on about Dorian's youthful beauty, until Dorian tells him to

shut up

Despite Henry's role of mentor and Svengali, it's symbolically appropriate that Dorian lies slightly above Henry in the steam bath, because Dorian has taken control. For all his cynical talk, Henry is vulnerable. He's transparently smitten with Dorian, and Dorian knows it. This knowledge gives Dorian power. He keeps Henry loyal, to the point where Henry has trouble believing the ugly truth that Dorian is a murderer, even when Dorian's behavior ought to rouse suspicion, and even when he hands Henry this oblique but not terribly subtle confession. The film spells out the evil that Dorian does, and it's neither his substance abuse nor his sexual promiscuity: he uses people. For his own selfish pleasure and for the joy of controlling others, he makes his conquests think he cares about them when he doesn't. He dumps them whenever they become inconvenient. A sociopath but not an utter monster, Dorian does sometimes feel guilty, but the guilt isn't strong enough to prevent him from doing more of the same.

Alan Campbell commits suicide, an event that finally drives Dorian over the edge. In his secret attic room, he looks at the picture, which now has wild gray hair, a greentinted face, and blood on its clawed hands. Horrified, shuddering, Dorian thinks of Basil and Alan, of all his victims. They flash before his eyes in strobelike pulses. He now knows just how low he can sink. He's in love with himself only in a shallow, narcissistic way, without really loving himself in the more altruistic sense of the word—and since he's a true Wildean creature and always kills the thing he loves, he now kills himself. With the camera from Dorian's point of view, he picks up a huge knife and seems to stab toward himself, not toward the portrait as in other dramatizations. Changing to the omniscient point of view, the cam-

era shows Dorian's bloodied hands and a face that now echoes the aged, corrupt portrait. The portrait, meanwhile, has reverted to its original appearance of youth and beauty. Dorian has dumped himself the same way he dumped his

Critics almost unanimously savaged THE SECRET OF DORIAN GRAY. The movie does have some structural problems, most obviously a confusion about the time frame. due to some careless use of sixties props and cars in scenes apparently set in the fifties. Most reviewers criticized the sex scenes, though they're tame by today's standards. The original reviews are full of puzzling comments such as this one from "Rick" in Variety (November 18, 1970): "Director Massimo Dallamano's attempts at creating an atmosphere of evil, horror, and perversion are frequently ludicrous to the point of provoking laughter. Perhaps the attempt at camp is intentional and as such it is the film's primary entertainment value, since neither Dallamano's direction, cameraman Otello Spila's bright garish lighting, the acting, nor Dallamano's and Marcello Coscia's screenplay create any real suspense or horror." But if the "attempt" at camp provokes laughter, then on some level, it succeeds. "Rick" apparently couldn't decide whether he ought to laugh with the movie, or at it. In the late sixties, most mass-market humor about gays still consisted of limp-wristed stereotypes and aggressively insulting "faggot jokes." Someone with little exposure to the emerging gay scene wouldn't understand this movie's inside humor. Some reviewers who probably did understand (because they themselves were gay) evaded discussing the subject in public. The movie plays coy, but today's audience is better equipped to appreciate the gay subtext.

Another reason for this film's poor reception in 1970 may have been bad timing, appearing as it did near the end of a long series of increasingly outlandish fashion fads that mutated within months or even weeks. Production Designer Karen Bromley and Art Director Mario Ambrosino loaded THE SECRET OF DORIAN GRAY with so much commercialized trendiness that the movie already looked fake and dated by the time it opened. The film looked ridiculous, until it aged enough to become a period piece. It's far more

fun to watch now than it was in 1970,

"Prayer must never be answered; if it is, it ceases to be prayer and becomes a correspondence."

Dan Curtis Productions knew how to make reasonably credible costume dramas on a shoestring budget, and proved it with that daily soap opera of the supernatural, DARK SHADOWS (1,225 episodes in the original ABC-TV series from 1966-1971). This convoluted, addictive Gothic romance moved back and forth in time, to chronicle the Collins family generations and their seriously haunted an-

cestral New England home

Head writer Sam Hall based many of DARK SHA-DOWS' plots on horror classics. A 1969 story arc, anchored around a prolonged flashback to 1897, included a pastiche of The Picture of Dorian Gray. This plot, in episodes 800-883, doesn't retell Wilde's novel or use his characters, but involves an attempt by Count Andreas Petofi, alias Victor Fenn-Gibbon (Thayer David), to cure the antihero, Quentin Collins (David Selby when Quentin is human and Chris Jennings in hirsute horror makeup) of his lycanthropic curse. Petofi commissions a painting of Quentin by Charles Delaware Tate (Roger Davis). Tate's paintings have amazing properties. The portrait of Quentin "changes to a painting of a werewolf each full moon, leaving Ouentin free to follow more worldly pursuits. The portrait also has one nice side benefit- immortality. As the years go by, the portrait ages but Quentin remains eternally young." (The Dark Shadows Companion: 25th Anniversary Collection, edited by Kathrvn Leigh Scott, Pomegranate Press, 1990.)

Four years later, Dan Curtis produced a true adaptation of Wilde's novel. On April 23 and April 24, 1973, ABC-TV premiered OSCAR WILDE'S THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY as a two-part, three-hour miniseries, in color and set in 1891. Glenn Jordan directed a cast including Shane Briant as Dorian Gray, Nigel Davenport as Lord Henry Wotton, Charles Aidman as Basil Hallward, and Vanessa Howard as Sybil Vane. John Karlen, a familiar face from DARK SHAD-OWS (where he was best known as Willie Loomis), played Dorian's friend and probable lover, Alan Campbell, in this version a composite of two of Wilde's characters, Alan Campbell and Adrian Singleton.

This PICTURE evokes DARK SHADOWS so strongly that viewers familiar with the old soap might easily identify this as a Curtis production without ever seeing the credits. Art director Trevor Williams designed sets for DARK SHA-DOWS, an experience that no doubt came in handy, since this TV-movie looks as though Williams once again had to make do with an inadequate budget. The sets look . . . like sets. The composer, Robert Cobert, also wrote scores for DARK SHADOWS. Cobert's music remains in the background, appropriate but not noticeable. John Tomerlin quotes or paraphrases directly from Wilde for much of his teleplay's dialogue. Nevertheless, his script, though less revisionist than most, takes some liberties with Wilde's plot.

A voiceover by Dorian Gray (actually his ghost, as it turns out) begins during the opening credits. "A man's destiny, some say, is written in the stars. All he'll ever do, all he'll ever love, all he'll ever be, the whole of his life is inscribed in the heavens, some say. Others claim to see the truth in other places, in a deck of cards, the palm of a hand, a crystal ball, or the bottom of a cup. Perhaps it's in all of those-perhaps none of them. For my part, the only glimpse of the future fate ever provided were in men's faces. There, I've read passion, greed, hatred, envy; and knowing what had been, knew also what had to be. So many faces, too many, and most of them not very pleasant . . .

As various faces appear, Dorian passes judgment: "Sir Harry Wotton, rich, idle, bored with life-a man who, to use his own words, knew the price of everything, the value of nothing." Harry, a snooty fellow with effete gestures, uses a cigarette holder and sniffs haughtily for emphasis. Dorian calls Basil Hallward, "a kind and generous man, a superb painter, as good a friend as I ever knew.

Even Basil, one of the few characters with conventional morals, voices an attitude common to most of these characters: he thinks he's not responsible for his own actions. Painting the fatal portrait, he claims that, "Some strange force seemed to be guiding my brush. It was almost as if I were painting my own soul." Before meeting the subject of the portrait, Harry expects Dorian to be "one of those charming, brainless types, the delight of hostesses in search of a table-setting. They're most valuable in the winter, when there are no flowers.

That's a good guess! Handsome, blonde Shane Briant, who strongly resembles Wilde's description of Dorian, interprets the character as shallow, spoiled, petulant, selfish, and immature. He might as easily be playing Bosie Douglas or John Gray (another of Wilde's young lovers who remains a front runner in the Dorian Sweepstakes), though the actor had no profound knowledge of the circumstances of Wilde's life.

Dorian loves looking at his own portrait and admiring himself in the mirror. The camera focuses on his large, distinctive amber ring, as his voice resumes the prologue: "The stars, the cards, the human face-what good does it do to read the future in any of them, if the words cannot be changed? And if they cannot, then only one question remains: Who does the writing?" The ring dissolves into the painted ring on Dorian's hand in the portrait, as the camera pulls back and shows the picture for the first time. "If I knew the answer to that, if I could be sure, then I would know whether to curse God for what my life has been,

or praise the Devil." It doesn't occur to this Dorian to

As Dorian poses, Harry cynically admits (brags, really) that he's "an evil influence." He mouths one clever Wildean epigram after another, while plucking a flower apart. (The mutilated flower serves the same function as the butterfly in the 1945 movie.) Harry tells Dorian, "It takes courage, Mr. Gray, to realize one's own nature, fully and completely. The bravest man among us is afraid of himself-of his desires." He says this suggestively, with a meaningful emphasis on "desires." "We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse we strangle broods in the mind and poisons us." (Much of this dialogue come from the second chapter of Wilde's novel.) Dorian listens with trancelike passivity. "You . . have had passions that made you afraid, thoughts that have filled you with terror, daydreams and dreams asleep, the very mention of which can make you tremble . . . The easiest way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it."

The decency of Basil and his cute little orphaned niece, Beatrice (played as a child by Kim Richards and as an adult by Linda Kelsey) can't compete with Harry's seductions. As usual, Harry nudges Dorian into fearing "the horrors of age" and "memories of passions we were afraid to gratify, of temptations we hadn't the courage to yield to. Youth, Dorian, there is absolutely nothing in the world but youth.

After Dorian makes his devil's bargain with the painting and follows Harry's hedonistic advice, he childishly blames anyone but himself for his vices, which involve the usual gambling dens and whorehouses. In a gin mill, he meets Sybil, a virginal, blue-eved blonde barmaid who wants to be an actress. (Vanessa Howard's bleached hair is a distracting anachronism. Only floozies bleached their hair in 1891.) When Dorian confesses his infatuation with Sybil to Harry, the older man cruelly teases him, but adds, "You couldn't help telling me. All through your life, you will tell me everything you do." Harry says these words in a curiously deliberate, emphatic way, so that they sound like "words of power," the affirmation at the end of a wizard's spell. Harry takes Mephistophelian control over Dorian, who finally neglects Sybil so much that she kills herself by jumping off a bridge, while a woman sitting next to Dorian at the opera feels him up.

Harry, who arranges many liaisons between Dorian and married women, is married himself, but from the way he behaves toward Dorian, it's clear that Harry is gay. (Men are just Wilde about Harry, and Harry's Wilde about them.) Basil calls himself "an old bachelor" (hint, hint). Dorian is clearly presented as a bisexual. As he tells Basil about his "new thoughts," a handsome young man walks past. Dorian and the young man smile at each other in a provocative way. Subject to network television broadcast standards in 1973, the movie minimizes the gay subtext, but never en-

tirely avoids it.

Soon, the portrait looks too nasty for public viewing, so upstairs it goes to the dusty nursery. Dorian kids himself that the picture might revert to its original appearance if he does good deeds, but as he thinks this, the scene changes to a party, where a married woman slips Dorian her key. Free to abandon all impulse control, knowing his debauchery won't show on his face, Dorian grows cold and mean, a user who buys people. He even buys the privilege of deflowering a prostitute's underage daughter. He calls the telltale portrait, "Liar!"-yet, for two years, he stops looking at it altogether, for fear of what it will show him about himself. There's a hint of salvation in this, for if he were totally fallen, he wouldn't care.

Basil confronts Dorian and warns him that people are saving "dreadful" things about him. "Dorian, I want to understand, I want to be able to defend you, but I can't look into your soul." With eerie calm, Dorian asks, "Would you like to?" He shows Basil the "diary" of his soul: old, craven, with ulcerated skin. "I've seen it change in response to deeds not yet done." In other words, Dorian sees the antici-

patory change in the picture but goes ahead and does the dirty deeds anyway, as if he's a victim of predestination who can't stop himself. Dorian doesn't perceive the painting as his conscience. He reacts to it as if it were an authority figure who always expects the worst from a child and constantly berates him with unconstructive criticism, until the child figures that there's no point in trying to be good, since he's going to get blamed for being bad no matter how he behaves. By displacing society's expectations onto the picture in this manner, Dorian presents himself as a Victorian prehippie, who echoes a countercultural attitude from the sixties that an audience of 1973 would recognize: "The system made me do it."

Basil calls Dorian a monster, but soon Dorian's a murderer, too, as he impulsively bludgeons Basil to death with a candlestick. The hands of the portrait drip with blood, but Dorian gets away with murder. This time, though, it isn't Basil's corpse that forces Dorian to turn to ex-lover Alan Campbell for help. No, years go by, and eventually Dorian kills Sybil's vengeful brother, James (Tom McCorry), who's been blackmailing him. It is then that Dorian blackmails Alan into agreeing to get rid of James's body, after which he coolly and intimately offers Alan breakfast, as if nothing were wrong! Like Sybil, Alan ends up a suicide.

Meanwhile, Basil's niece, Beatrice, has fallen in love with Dorian. (This is another echo of the 1945 film, in which it was Basil's ward, Gladys, who sought Dorian's love.) She won't believe the rumors about him, even when he tries to confess. She thinks people speak ill of him because they envy him. After a romantic, candlelit wedding to Beatrice, Dorian thinks he's starting to redeem himself, but the picture looks like a decomposed corpse, with a sneering laugh on its face. Dorian realizes, "It knew why I'd married Beatrice-to escape, of course! I didn't love her. I didn't love anything! How could I, so long as this foul thing existed? So long as it knew every secret corner of my heart and of my brain, it would follow me wherever I went and whatever I did, until it destroyed me or I destroyed it!"

Dorian's destruction swiftly follows. The viewer, from the camera's point of view behind the easel (by now the traditional placement for this scene, since it allows for the substitution of a blank canvas and the survival-for further takes-of the portrait) sees Dorian's knife tearing through the canvas from the back. Beatrice, awakened by Dorian's scream, finds him dead, lying on his back, with the knife in his heart. He now looks like the portrait in its final deterioration: nearly skeletal, rotted, with one eye white and his mouth gaping in a rictus. Beatrice identifies him by his amber ring. The picture has reverted to its original state of

youthful beauty.

With all the commercial breaks and the Part One end credits deleted (the end credits after the second episode run slightly over one minute), the Dan Curtis telefilm contains approximately an hour and 54 minutes of content. A large chunk of the long opening monologue is recycled verbatim as the prologue to Part Two, and yet again as the epilogue! Some repetition is unavoidable in a two-part TV drama, where the audience needs a little bit of "the story so far . to start off the second episode, but these excessive recapitulations seem like padding and bog down the pace. The pilogue robs the ending somewhat of its drama. Editing to fit a shorter time slot (perhaps two and a half hours instead of three), would have improved this version. Still, the implication that Dorian destroys himself through his failure to accept responsibility for his actions makes this an interesting interpretation of Wilde's story. Certainly, it must have proved interesting for an audience just beginning to have second thoughts about the hedonistic sixties.

NEXT: Women as Dorian in the conclusion of THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

era shows Dorian's bloodied hands and a face that now echoes the aged, corrupt portrait. The portrait, meanwhile, has reverted to its original appearance of youth and beauty. Dorian has dumped himself the same way he dumped his other victims.

Critics almost unanimously savaged THE SECRET OF DORIAN GRAY. The movie does have some structural problems, most obviously a confusion about the time frame, due to some careless use of sixties props and cars in scenes apparently set in the fifties. Most reviewers criticized the sex scenes, though they're tame by today's standards. The original reviews are full of puzzling comments such as this one from "Rick" in Variety (November 18, 1970): "Director Massimo Dallamano's attempts at creating an atmosphere of evil, horror, and perversion are frequently ludicrous to the point of provoking laughter. Perhaps the attempt at camp is intentional and as such it is the film's primary entertainment value, since neither Dallamano's direction, cameraman Otello Spila's bright garish lighting, the acting, nor Dallamano's and Marcello Coscia's screenplay create any real suspense or horror." But if the "attempt" at camp provokes laughter, then on some level, it succeeds. "Rick" apparently couldn't decide whether he ought to laugh with the movie, or at it. In the late sixties, most mass-market humor about gays still consisted of limp-wristed stereotypes and aggressively insulting "faggot jokes." Someone with little exposure to the emerging gay scene wouldn't under-stand this movie's inside humor. Some reviewers who probably did understand (because they themselves were gay) evaded discussing the subject in public. The movie plays coy, but today's audience is better equipped to appreciate the gay subtext.

Another reason for this film's poor reception in 1970 may have been bad timing, appearing as it did near the end of a long series of increasingly outlandish fashion fads that mutated within months or even weeks. Production Designer Karen Bromley and Art Director Mario Ambrosino loaded THE SECRET OF DORIAN GRAY with so much commercialized trendiness that the movie already looked fake and dated by the time it opened. The film looked ridiculous, until it aged enough to become a period piece. It's far more fun to watch now than it was in 1970.

"Prayer must never be answered; if it is, it ceases to be prayer and becomes a correspondence."

Dan Curtis Productions knew how to make reasonably credible costume dramas on a shoestring budget, and proved it with that daily soap opera of the supernatural, DARK SHADOWS (1,225 episodes in the original ABC-TV series from 1966-1971). This convoluted, addictive Gothic romance moved back and forth in time, to chronicle the Collins family generations and their seriously haunted an-

Head writer Sam Hall based many of DARK SHA-DOWS' plots on horror classics. A 1969 story arc, anchored around a prolonged flashback to 1897, included a pastiche of The Picture of Dorian Gray. This plot, in episodes 800-883, doesn't retell Wilde's novel or use his characters, but involves an attempt by Count Andreas Petofi, alias Victor Fenn-Gibbon (Thayer David), to cure the antihero, Quentin Collins (David Selby when Quentin is human and Chris Jennings in hirsute horror makeup) of his lycanthropic curse. Petofi commissions a painting of Quentin by Charles Delaware Tate (Roger Davis). Tate's paintings have amazing properties. The portrait of Quentin "changes to a painting of a werewolf each full moon, leaving Quentin free to follow more worldly pursuits. The portrait also has one nice side benefit— immortality. As the years go by, the portrait ages but Quentin remains eternally young." (The Dark Shadows Companion: 25th Anniversary Collection, edited by Kathryn Leigh Scott, Pomegranate Press, 1990.)

Four years later, Dan Curtis produced a true adaptation of Wilde's novel. On April 23 and April 24, 1973, ABC-TV premiered OSCAR WILDE'S THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY as a two-part, three-hour miniseries, in color and set in 1891. Glenn Jordan directed a cast including Shane Briant as Dorian Gray, Nigel Davenport as Lord Henry Wotton, Charles Aidman as Basil Hallward, and Vanessa Howard as Sybil Vane. John Karlen, a familiar face from DARK SHAD-OWS (where he was best known as Willie Loomis), played Dorian's friend and probable lover, Alan Campbell, in this version a composite of two of Wilde's characters, Alan Campbell and Adrian Singleton.

This PICTURE evokes DARK SHADOWS so strongly that viewers familiar with the old soap might easily identify this as a Curtis production without ever seeing the credits. Art director Trevor Williams designed sets for DARK SHA-DOWS, an experience that no doubt came in handy, since this TV-movie looks as though Williams once again had to make do with an inadequate budget. The sets look . . . like sets. The composer, Robert Cobert, also wrote scores for DARK SHADOWS. Cobert's music remains in the background, appropriate but not noticeable. John Tomerlin quotes or paraphrases directly from Wilde for much of his teleplay's dialogue. Nevertheless, his script, though less revisionist than most, takes some liberties with Wilde's plot.

A voiceover by Dorian Gray (actually his ghost, as it turns out) begins during the opening credits. "A man's destiny, some say, is written in the stars. All he'll ever do, all he'll ever love, all he'll ever be, the whole of his life is inscribed in the heavens, some say. Others claim to see the truth in other places, in a deck of cards, the palm of a hand, a crystal ball, or the bottom of a cup. Perhaps it's in all of those-perhaps none of them. For my part, the only glimpse of the future fate ever provided were in men's faces. There, I've read passion, greed, hatred, envy; and knowing what had been, knew also what had to be. So many faces, too many, and most of them not very pleasant . .

As various faces appear, Dorian passes judgment: "Sir Harry Wotton, rich, idle, bored with life-a man who, to use his own words, knew the price of everything, the value of nothing." Harry, a snooty fellow with effete gestures, uses a cigarette holder and sniffs haughtily for emphasis. Dorian calls Basil Hallward, "a kind and generous man, a

superb painter, as good a friend as I ever knew.'

Even Basil, one of the few characters with conventional morals, voices an attitude common to most of these characters: he thinks he's not responsible for his own actions. Painting the fatal portrait, he claims that, "Some strange force seemed to be guiding my brush. It was almost as if I were painting my own soul." Before meeting the subject of the portrait, Harry expects Dorian to be "one of those charming, brainless types, the delight of hostesses in search of a table-setting. They're most valuable in the winter, when there are no flowers.

That's a good guess! Handsome, blonde Shane Briant, who strongly resembles Wilde's description of Dorian, interprets the character as shallow, spoiled, petulant, selfish, and immature. He might as easily be playing Bosie Douglas or John Gray (another of Wilde's young lovers who remains a front runner in the Dorian Sweepstakes), though the actor had no profound knowledge of the circumstances of Wilde's life.

Dorian loves looking at his own portrait and admiring himself in the mirror. The camera focuses on his large, distinctive amber ring, as his voice resumes the prologue: "The stars, the cards, the human face—what good does it do to read the future in any of them, if the words cannot be changed? And if they cannot, then only one question remains: Who does the writing?" The ring dissolves into the painted ring on Dorian's hand in the portrait, as the camera pulls back and shows the picture for the first time. "If I knew the answer to that, if I could be sure, then I would know whether to curse God for what my life has been,

cestral New England home.

or praise the Devil." It doesn't occur to this Dorian to blame himself.

As Dorian poses, Harry cynically admits (brags, really) that he's "an evil influence." He mouths one clever Wildean epigram after another, while plucking a flower apart. (The mutilated flower serves the same function as the butterfly in the 1945 movie.) Harry tells Dorian, "It takes courage, Mr. Gray, to realize one's own nature, fully and completely. The bravest man among us is afraid of himself—of his desires." He says this suggestively, with a meaningful emphasis on "desires." "We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse we strangle broods in the mind and poisons us." (Much of this dialogue come from the second chapter of Wilde's novel.) Dorian listens with trancelike passivity. "You . . . have had passions that made you afraid, thoughts that have filled you with terror, daydreams and dreams asleep, the very mention of which can make you tremble The easiest way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it."

The decency of Basil and his cute little orphaned niece, Beatrice (played as a child by Kim Richards and as an adult by Linda Kelsey) can't compete with Harry's seductions. As usual, Harry nudges Dorian into fearing "the horrors of age" and "memories of passions we were afraid to gratify, of temptations we hadn't the courage to yield to. Youth, Dorian, there is absolutely nothing in the world but youth."

After Dorian makes his devil's bargain with the painting and follows Harry's hedonistic advice, he childishly blames anyone but himself for his vices, which involve the usual gambling dens and whorehouses. In a gin mill, he meets Sybil, a virginal, blue-eyed blonde barmaid who wants to be an actress. (Vanessa Howard's bleached hair is a distracting anachronism. Only floozies bleached their hair in 1891.) When Dorian confesses his infatuation with Sybil to Harry, the older man cruelly teases him, but adds, "You couldn't help telling me. All through your life, you will tell me everything you do." Harry says these words in a curiously deliberate, emphatic way, so that they sound like "words of power," the affirmation at the end of a wizard's spell. Harry takes Mephistophelian control over Dorian, who finally neglects Sybil so much that she kills herself by jumping off a bridge, while a woman sitting next to Dorian at the opera feels him up.

Harry, who arranges many liaisons between Dorian and married women, is married himself, but from the way he behaves toward Dorian, it's clear that Harry is gay. (Men are just Wilde about Harry, and Harry's Wilde about them.) Basil calls himself "an old bachelor" (hint, hint). Dorian is clearly presented as a bisexual. As he tells Basil about his "new thoughts," a handsome young man walks past. Dorian and the young man smile at each other in a provocative way. Subject to network television broadcast standards in 1973, the movie minimizes the gay subtext, but never en-

tirely avoids it.

Soon, the portrait looks too nasty for public viewing, so upstairs it goes to the dusty nursery. Dorian kids himself that the picture might revert to its original appearance if he does good deeds, but as he thinks this, the scene changes to a party, where a married woman slips Dorian her key. Free to abandon all impulse control, knowing his debauchery won't show on his face, Dorian grows cold and mean, a user who buys people. He even buys the privilege of deflowering a prostitute's underage daughter. He calls the telltale portrait, "Liar!"—yet, for two years, he stops looking at it altogether, for fear of what it will show him about himself. There's a hint of salvation in this, for if he were totally fallen, he wouldn't care.

Basil confronts Dorian and warns him that people are saying "dreadful" things about him. "Dorian, I want to understand, I want to be able to defend you, but I can't look into your soul." With eerie calm, Dorian asks, "Would you like to?" He shows Basil the "diary" of his soul: old, craven, with ulcerated skin. "I've seen it change in response to deeds not yet done." In other words, Dorian sees the antici-

patory change in the picture but goes ahead and does the dirty deeds anyway, as if he's a victim of predestination who can't stop himself. Dorian doesn't perceive the painting as his conscience. He reacts to it as if it were an authority figure who always expects the worst from a child and constantly berates him with unconstructive criticism, until the child figures that there's no point in trying to be good, since he's going to get blamed for being bad no matter how he behaves. By displacing society's expectations onto the picture in this manner, Dorian presents himself as a Victorian prehippie, who echoes a countercultural attitude from the sixties that an audience of 1973 would recognize: "The system made me do it."

Basil calls Dorian a monster, but soon Dorian's a murderer, too, as he impulsively bludgeons Basil to death with a candlestick. The hands of the portrait drip with blood, but Dorian gets away with murder. This time, though, it isn't Basil's corpse that forces Dorian to turn to ex-lover Alan Campbell for help. No, years go by, and eventually Dorian kills Sybil's vengeful brother, James (Tom McCorry), who's been blackmailing him. It is then that Dorian blackmails Alan into agreeing to get rid of James's body, after which he coolly and intimately offers Alan breakfast, as if nothing

were wrong! Like Sybil, Alan ends up a suicide.

Meanwhile, Basil's niece, Beatrice, has fallen in love with Dorian. (This is another echo of the 1945 film, in which it was Basil's ward, Gladys, who sought Dorian's love.) She won't believe the rumors about him, even when he tries to confess. She thinks people speak ill of him because they envy him. After a romantic, candlelit wedding to Beatrice, Dorian thinks he's starting to redeem himself, but the picture looks like a decomposed corpse, with a sneering laugh on its face. Dorian realizes, "It knew why I'd married Beatrice—to escape, of course! I didn't love her. I didn't love anything! How could I, so long as this foul thing existed? So long as it knew every secret corner of my heart and of my brain, it would follow me wherever I went and whatever I did, until it destroyed me or I destroyed it!"

Dorian's destruction swiftly follows. The viewer, from the camera's point of view behind the easel (by now the traditional placement for this scene, since it allows for the substitution of a blank canvas and the survival—for further takes—of the portrait) sees Dorian's knife tearing through the canvas from the back. Beatrice, awakened by Dorian's scream, finds him dead, lying on his back, with the knife in his heart. He now looks like the portrait in its final deterioration: nearly skeletal, rotted, with one eye white and his mouth gaping in a rictus. Beatrice identifies him by his amber ring. The picture has reverted to its original state of

youthful beauty.

With all the commercial breaks and the Part One end credits deleted (the end credits after the second episode run slightly over one minute), the Dan Curtis telefilm contains approximately an hour and 54 minutes of content. A large chunk of the long opening monologue is recycled verbatim as the prologue to Part Two, and yet again as the epilogue! Some repetition is unavoidable in a two-part TV drama, where the audience needs a little bit of "the story so far . . " to start off the second episode, but these excessive recapitulations seem like padding and bog down the pace. The epilogue robs the ending somewhat of its drama. Editing to fit a shorter time slot (perhaps two and a half hours instead of three), would have improved this version. Still, the implication that Dorian destroys himself through his failure to accept responsibility for his actions makes this an interesting interpretation of Wilde's story. Certainly, it must have proved interesting for an audience just beginning to have second thoughts about the hedonistic sixties.

NEXT: Women as Dorian in the conclusion of THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

URSULA ANDRESS

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One year later, the marriage was kaput. John Derek went on to exploit wives Linda Evans (married from 1968 to 1974) and No Derek (1977 till his death in 1998), and Andress went on to appear in WHAT'S NEW, PUSSYCAT? and THE TENTH VICTIM (both 1965), THE BLUE MAX (1966), CASINO ROYALE (1967), PERFECT FRIDAY (1970), Ray Harryhausen's CLASH OF THE TITANS (1981, during which she met her lover of four years, actor Harry Hamlin), and two dozen other films.

In 1994, Scarlet Street spoke briefly with Ursula Andress as part of our tribute to Peter Cushing, who had just died. The onetime She remembered Cushing and their fellow star, Christopher Lee, with great affection:

Ursula Andress: Oh, Peter Cushing was such a nice man! I did SHE with him, and we had such a pleasant time. I just saw Christopher Lee in Germany and he had talked about Peter. He said he had some heart trouble, so he must have finally had a heart attack, no?

Scarlet Street: His death was the result of cancer, actually.

UA: It's very sad. I honestly liked him a lot. He was so pleasant and he lived for his plays and his movies, and to be an actor. Christopher Lee and I were such good friends, too. We were living close to each other in the country outside London and really got to know each other.

SS: Lee and Cushing were always very close. UA: Such people as Peter Cushing, they don't exist anymore today. They were actors who really lived for their profession and they took time for personal feelings; they took time. He was so kind to people and always so very helpful.

DENNIS WAYNE

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played by Gary Chryst, who introduced Dorian to drugs and led him down a bad path. Actually, Gary portrayed Lord Henry Wotton, also.

"Joe Layton was a star on Broadway, and he had worked in Hollywood. This was his first attempt at the Joffrey Ballet. He received a lot of publicity, a lot of attention, a lot of write-up—a lot of people were waiting for DOUBLE EXPOSURE. I didn't play Dorian like an out and out queen; I was more innocent. Besides, you don't have to be a queen to be gay; you could be a truck driver."

Wayne was particularly impressed by Cris Alexander's photography. "With one bristle on his brush, Cris brushed the original so that each photo would be from the same negative, but it was reworked to age. Incredibly done! Incredibly done! During the technical rehearsals—and there were a great many in the ballet, because there's a lot of technical complications—I never looked at myself in the photographs. I kept it for the world

première, the opening night performance. I looked at the final photograph and I was late for my next scene, because I was blown away! 'Holy shit! Is that me?' It was amazing! It was me, my body, but hairless, and the face and the teeth were incredible. It was scary!"

According to Wayne, the sheer horror of the final photograph was used to create DOUBLE EXPOS-URE's denouement. "When I saw the picture, I was on a platform five feet off the ground. I didn't stab the photograph as in the novel and all the other versions, but the shock of seeing it made me fall back. Dorian died from the fall."

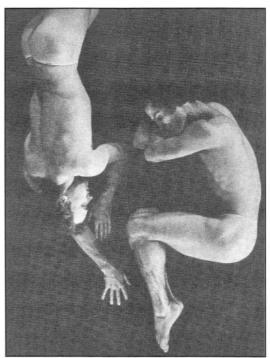
Critical reaction to DOUBLE EX-POSURE proved less than favorable. "Oh, they tore it apart—bad choreography, bad idea, bad staging, everything! There wasn't one thing good said about it, other than for the performers. It got torn apart, and it's never been revived. It was very popular with the audience, though; every time we performed it, it sold out. Unfortunately with the Joffrey Ballet, whenever they'd get a bad review from Clive Barnes, they'd drop the ballet. They'd take it out of the rep-

ertoire because Clive Barnes didn't like it! But it sold tickets! In my opinion, it was a wonderful ballet. It was wonderful for me personally, too, because the ballet was 52 minutes long and I never left the stage! And I enjoyed the creative process in the studio, where the ballet worked much, much better than it did on the stage. It lost a certain amount of intimacy on the stage. Certain ballets work better in the studio, but unfortunately ballets are made for the stage, not the studio.

"Personally, I don't care about reviews. After I left Joffrey, I had my own company for 13 years. I never did get any good reviews. The critic is just one person. He's not an authority. Why should I care what Clive Barnes thinks about a ballet? He was an alcoholic and about two hundred pounds overweight, yet he passed judgement. Now, if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have made the kind of money I made when I just started, because he really liked me and gave me wonderful personal reviews. Clive Barnes was very generous to me. I'm a personal friend of his, but I still said to his face that I have a problem with critics, especially those who aren't themselves dancers.

Some months after Dorian Gray tumbled to his death, Dennis Wayne himself came perilously close to extinction. At four o'clock in the morning, on September 17, 1972, Wayne and live-in lover (and fellow dancer) Bonnie Mathis were awakened in their apartment by an intruder brandishing a knife. He stabbed Mathis, then viciously fought Wayne until the dancer grabbed a gun.

"He was a maniac, incredibly strong, and I knew I was losing and was going to



nately with the Joffrey Ballet, Dancers Dennis Wayne (left) and Dermot whenever they'd get a bad review Burke (right) both played Dorian Gray in the from Clive Barnes, they'd drop the Joffrey Ballet's 1972 DOUBLE EXPOSURE.

die. Well, I had a gun. I shot him. I didn't try to kill him, but I wanted to wound him enough to overcome him. The minute I did, he stopped fighting and gave up. I asked why he'd done what he done, but he never answered. Even later, in court, he never answered. I don't know to this day."

Wayne's wounds were far more serious than those suffered by Mathis. He was stabbed in the left lung, almost dying as a result, and the torn muscles in his right thigh took eight months to heal. The experience profoundly changed his life.

"Getting stabbed was nothing compared to what it did to my mind. I'd never hurt anyone before in my life, but I fought like an animal. I'm a dancer, not an animal—and afterwards I found it hard to reconcile the two parts of myself into one picture of Dennis Wayne."

A dancer's career is often brief. His life revolves around his own body. Dorian's desire to remain forever young and beautiful must surely touch a cord with anyone whose livelihood, whose passion, depends on youth. Dennis Wayne, who had come so near death at such an early age, who had con barely hesitated when he was asked if, given the opportunity to have a portrait that would age in his stead, he would take it.

"Oh, I'd do that tomorrow! Absolutely! I'm one of those rare people who would love to live for a thousand years. Most of my friends think I'm crazy, but I can't lie—if I had a photograph that aged instead of me, I'd opt for that tomorrow. Especially if my body didn't age...."

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COCKTAILS FOR FOUR

Hatfield for Cinefantastique magazine.

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SIX BLOCKS ON THE CAMINO REAL, in which Hatfield brilliantly embodied the spirit of Lord Byron.

I wish a producer had been present that long-ago day to give Curtis Harrington, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Hurd Hatfield the script and the glory that they so very richly deserved. Still, there was at least one positive outcome of that meeting: eventually, Elizabeth Shepherd and I did an audio track [perhaps the first ever] for TOMB OF LIGEIA. I've also prepared a video interview with Piper Laurie to accompany Curtis Harrington's Director's Cut DVD of RUBY (1977). And I was privileged to write the obituary for Hurd

NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS

Continued from page 19

Glenn Erickson, the editor responsible for restoring the ending to KISS ME DEADLY (1955), generously offered his services to inspect the negative and other additional materials at the archives. While the negative also contained the 94-minute version, records and paperwork indicated a print running three reels longer resided in MGM's preservation vault, located deep in a Kansas City salt pit. After pulling some strings, Gross succeeded in getting authorization to have the longer print shipped to the Burbank vault.

"Glenn and I went in again and inspected it, and discovered it was indeed the longer cut. Glenn measured the film in order to calculate an accurate running time. The version recovered has Dan Curtis's preferred running time of 129 minutes. I inspected the film reel by reel and examined all the audio elements currently preserved in the vaults. Unfortunately, a complete soundtrack does not exist, but 100 minutes of audio elements are currently held, but Jim Pierson has contacted 90% of the cast needed to rerecord dialogue for the restoration and all have responded with enthusiasm and excitement."

Dan Curtis is reportedly excited about the news, as is screenwriter Sam Hall, who was crushed by the film's disastrous recutting. "I had given up on ever seeing the complete version years ago. I'm completely delighted that this version has been found. It'll be great to have a version out there that actually makes sense!"

"The 129-minute version is a Gothic masterpiece," enthuses Gross. "The characters are more satisfyingly developed, the acting is top-notch, and several scare sequences are even stronger. The legendary climactic séance sequence is a wonderfully haunting set piece, beautifully photographed and edited."

The current plan is to rerecord the missing sections, remix the sound and effects tracks, and completely restore the film under the direction and supervision of Darren Gross with DCP acting as producers. Dan Curtis Productions and Turner are currently in negotiations towards that end.

BELIEVE IN BELIEVE

Continued from page 25

Tinnell, a budding auteur who conceived as well as directed KIDS OF THE ROUND TABLE, FRANKENSTEIN AND ME, and BELIEVE, serves as a harsh critic of his own work. Despite the praise heaped on the feature by fans and critics, he admits sometimes that it's difficult for him to watch some of his work. But he's happy with BELIEVE, in part because the production wasn't marred by battles between the director and his producers, as was the case with films such as FRANKENSTEIN AND ME. The only limits placed on Tinnell this time around were monetary—he had to bring in the picture on a \$2 million budget and a 20-day shooting schedule. To his credit, BELIEVE looks like a much more expensive film.

"There was very little interference and a tremendous amount of support," Tinnell said. "There are problems with it—but it's what it was intended to be and that's gratifying to me."

The DVD, available from Avalanche Entertainment for \$19.99, features a flawless, letterboxed transfer of the film, along with the original theatrical trailer, scene access, Spanish subtitles, cast and crew bios, and nifty animated menus. The letterboxing is especially important, since BE-LIEVE did not receive a theatrical release in the United States. The home VHS release of the film, also from Avalanche, is panned and scanned. The DVD, therefore, is the only way most Americans have to view the film in its intended aspect ratio.

SCREEN

Continued from page 29

Bonnie Graham (Deborah Walley) and Steve Gordon (John Ashley) share a similar on-again, off-again relationship. Bonnie, like Frankie, tends more toward promiscuity: Steve, however, mirrors Dee

Dee's passive-aggressiveness.

Aside from the dysfunctional dynamic of that foursome, Beach buffs will find an Altmanesque assemblage of subplots. Bullets (Paul Lynde) stages phony events to ballyhoo his protegee, songbird Sugar Kane (Linda Evans, surprisingly effective at lip-syncing vocals supplied by Robin "Wonderful Summer" Ward). Bonehead (Jody McCrea) discovers Lorelei (Marta Kristen), a beautiful mermaid who occasionally trades her tail for human legs. In a movie that boasts the labyrinthine complexity of BEACH BLANKÉT BINGO, the notion of a mermaid walking among humankind is but one of many plot threads, no more important than the ill-fated plot of Eric Von Zipper (Harvey Lembeck) to kidnap Sugar Kane.

The series' frequent costars, including Don Rickles, Donna Loren, Buster Keaton, and Bobbi Shaw, contribute their expected functions. Joining the festivities are a self-satirizing Timothy Carey (who briefly frugs so that we won't notice the absence of Candy Johnson) and columnist Earl Wilson as himself. The journalist's participation may well represent the finest cinematic performance in Wilson's career. He was self-conscious and stiff in COLLEGE CONFIDENTIAL (1960) and NIGHT OF EVIL (1962), but director William Asher has coaxed the clown out of him. Learning that Sugar has been imprisoned in the old sawmill, Wilson's exclamation "It's Pearl White, revisited!" is arguably the picture's wittiest one-liner.

BEACH BLANKET BINGO doesn't radically stray from the series formula, dusting off a de rigueur speeded-up motorcycle chase. The musical numbers are par for the beach, except for Frankie's Perry Como-styled ballad "These Are the Good Times." Visually, The Hondells' guitars and organ accompaniment is wonderfully inappropriate, given the soundtrack's schmaltzy string arrangement. The film's editing is choppier than usual, jumping between locations with little transition.

MGM's DVD, presented in 2:35-1 widescreen format only, displays lustrous colors that embarrass previous TV and VHS prints. The transfer is gorgeous, with only occasional speckles or reel change markings. Annette's solo "I'll Never Change Him" is mysteriously missing, similar to other recent editions. A matted (1:85-1) trailer is the only supplement, but it includes an unused closeup of a teary Donna Loren at the conclusion of her vocal weeper "It Only Hurts When I Cry."

-John F. Black

BARON BLOOD Image Entertainment

Image continues their fine restoration of obscure horror in this newest addition to the Mario Bava collection.

American Peter Kleist (Antonio Cantofora) returns to his ancestral home in Austria, referred to as "Castle of the Devils' ("It's good for the tourists," replies one character), which is being restored for sale at auction. There he meets Eva Arnold (Elke Sommer), who is aiding in the restoration. After learning the bloody family history, Peter and Eva call up the spirit of Peter's evil ancestor, Baron Von Kleist, using a spell created by the witch who damned the Baron centuries prior. A skulking, mutilated figure crawls from his grave and goes on a killing spree. Joseph Cotten pops up midway through the film as Alfred Becker, a wheelchair-bound man who buys the castle. (Guess who turns out to be the resuscitated Baron?

The film has few surprises storywise. Still, BARON BLOOD is a fine example of Bava's style. in which he returned to the Gothic style after the violent excesses of TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE (1971), the film that inspired such films as FRIDAY THE 13TH (1980).

Stelvio Cipriani's background score is at times most laughingly inappropriate (turning the film at times into an easy-listening travelogue), but Bava's imagery is so strong that it truly makes one uneasy

with the surroundings

Image's letterbox DVD is very sharp. The colors saturate the screen with a vibrancy that is, if anything, sharper than the old Movie lab prints that AIP released theatrically. The mono sound is good. Extras include the original theatrical trailer (amazing what they got away with using the old GP rating—the trailer features the most violent scene of the picture), filmographies for Sommer and Cotten, a Bava filmography and biography for Bava by Tim Lucas, and a gallery of press pics and posters. ("The management disclaims any responsibility for patrons who suffer . . . cerebral hemorrhages")

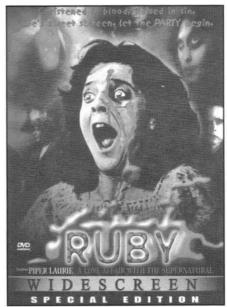
-Kevin G. Shinnick

RUBY VCI Home Entertainment \$19.99

For the past 20 years, RUBY (1977) has been available only in a heavily cut TV version. Most of the violence was removed and replaced with scenes involving the town sheriff, a character only mentioned in the original cut. Curtis Harrington, the director, was so dismayed by this version that he had his name removed from the print. Happily, the theatrical cut is back, thanks to VCI.

The move opens with a short prologue set in Florida, 1935. A pregnant Ruby Clair (Piper Laurie), a gangster's moll, witnesses her lover, Nicky (Sal Vecchio), being shot to death by the other members of their mob. She promptly gives birth.

"Sixteen Years Later," and Ruby now owns a drive-in, but she's still haunted by visions of that fateful night. She employs the surviving members of the gang, who have all gone straight. Ruby is considering committing her daughter Leslie (Janit Baldwin), who has never spoken a word, but apart from that and Ruby's frequent nightmares, things have been running smoothly. That's about to change. One



night the projectionist is strangled by the film he's showing. Ruby thinks it's suicide, but Vince (Stuart Whitman), her right-hand man and lover, suspects something much more sinister. As the ex-mobsters continue dying in bizarre ways, Vince calls in parapsychologist Dr. Keller (DARK SHADOWS veteran Roger Davis) to investigate. Keller thinks Leslie's trauma is providing a physical outlet for Nicky to exact his revenge from beyond.

RUBY is a perfect example of what a skilled director can do on a limited budget. The cast is well chosen and, along with the direction and score, make this an effective little chiller that ends on a low-key, romantic note—except for the last few seconds. That final, tacky "shock" was forced on Harrington and is not what

he had in mind at all.

VCI continues to match the high standards they set with last year's Mario Bava discs. Aside from a few soft shots, the print is extremely sharp and clear. The colors are well balanced and strong when called for, especially in the case of Ruby's ruby dresses and the neon of the drive-in. There are a few damaged frames, but they're minor and much less distracting than the cut version we've had to put up with all these years.

The extras alone are worth the purchase price. The commentary track features both Curtis Harrington and Piper Laurie. There are several slow spots, but the comments become more frequent as the film moves along, and are interesting and at times very funny. Both participants obviously like and respect each other and that makes for a warm and honest track. And where else are you going to learn that Piper Laurie has never worn a turban before or after RUBY? The highlight is the video interview with Harrington, conducted by Scarlet Street's David Del Valle. Simply put, this is the best interview vet featured on DVD. Add the usual bios, photo gallery, and one typically trashy seventies trailer, and you have the best restoration and DVD of the summer.

—Ron Morgan



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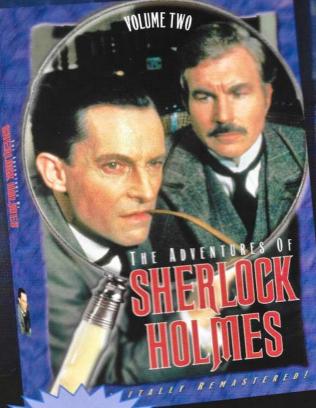
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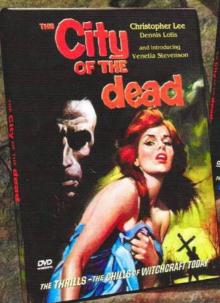
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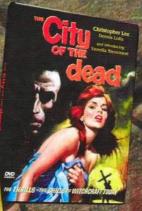
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